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By

PERCY CROSS STANDING

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CHAPTER I

THE SITUATION AFTER LEMBERG

THE capture of the important town of Lemberg, the capital of Galicia, by the forces of the Tsar during the first week of September may be said to have marked an epoch in the operations of the gigantic armies contending for the mastery in what had come to be popularly known as the Eastern Theatre of operations in the world-war. It was a very solid advantage, and one which gained for the Russian Army a substantial foothold upon Austrian territory. The struggle of the nations had endured for some weeks, and the victory of Lemberg was all the more welcome and popular be-

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cause it happened at a time when our Russian Allies needed a really heartening and enlivening success. For it would be absurd to say that the so-called "Russian steam-roller" had moved on from triumph to crushing triumph with that irresistible impulse which the arm-chair critics had so comfortably predicted for it. Indeed, after the threat to Danzig itself implied in General Rennenkampf's brilliant raid into Eastern Prussia, and his victory over the army of General von Hindenburg in the first decisive engagement of the war at Gumbinnen, the rushing back of masses of German troops from the western to the eastern theatre of operations had completely changed the situation. By admirable generalship, too, Von Hindenburg had turned the tables on his foe, and had inflicted a signal defeat on the invaders of East Prussia at Tannenberg.

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From this point, then, the Russians became for the moment no longer an attacking force. If they had inflicted, they had also suffered, immense losses. General Rennenkampf's brisk offensive through East Prussia had been definitively checked, and it behoved the Tsar's military advisers to find, and find speedily, what the American soldier-critic described as "another way round."

Meanwhile the Austrians had projected an invasion of Russian Poland which, successful in its initial stages, led up to a succession of disastrous reverses. A co-operating German force under General Preuske fared also very well for a while, its advance into Western Poland causing the abandonment of the important town of Lodz. But it speedily became evident that in General Russky, commander of the army designated to checkmate this

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invasion, Russia possessed a leader of conspicuous ability. The Germans were pressed back towards the Polish frontier, while the Austrians, upon whom the heaviest stress of this fighting fell, presently came in for a series of reverses. Thus, in what is known as the battle of Przemysl, the Austrian General Bankal was killed and five thousand prisoners captured. Then, in a further battle or series of conflicts lasting an entire week (August to September), Lemberg fell into Russian hands, and the Petrograd bulletins claimed upwards of sixty thousand Austrian prisoners and 637 guns. It is from this point that I take up the as yet rather obscure story of this fluctuating campaign, first premising that the extraordinary severity of the Russian censorship of news renders the task no light one.

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The Situation after Lemberg

While, during the first half of September, General Russky is gathering up the fruits of his victory of Lemberg pending a resumption of his successful advance through Galicia, we may be permitted to take a brief glance at the personalities of the men on whom the Grand-duke Nicholas, Russia's Imperial Commander-in-Chief, could principally depend. In the recent words of a high military authority: "There are, and always have been, brilliant soldiers in the upper grades of the Russian Army. At the beginning of the Great War Russia possessed three leaders of high reputation—Rennenkampf, a cavalry general, and the commander of one of the subsidiary armies under Kuropatkin in the Japanese War; Samsonoff, who had also fought in the Far East, and had the reputation of a first-class military organiser; and

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Russky, a scientific soldier, with a good record as a teacher of the art of war in the Russian Staff College. All three were among the commanders sent to the western frontier."

And what of their not less brilliant opponent; General von Hindenburg, popularly known in Germany to-day as "the Saviour of East Prussia"? This distinguished officer—who celebrated his sixty-seventh birthday shortly after his victory of Tannenberg, when quantities of "love-offerings" reached him from Berlin, where a street has already been named after him—was promptly promoted from the command in Eastern Prussia to that of the field-armies operating in Poland, and was made a Freeman of three great German cities. Here is a characteristic pæan of praise taken from one of Berlin's leading journals:

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" Not in contemplative peace and snug homeliness, as is appropriate to the birthday of a general, of his own early morning coffee, but outside in the iron field of the new battles, which thunder and lighten between the Vistula and the Dniester will Hindenburg, Germany's brilliant champion, celebrate his sixty-seventh birthday. And from Königsberg to Strassburg, from Cologne and Aix to Breslau and Przemysl, from the North Sea to the Adriatic, all Germans and all dwellers in the Habsburg lands whom Hindenburg now approaches in the guise of a helper will greet the day with a heartfelt joy."

In following the record of the operations it must be borne in mind that the huge Russian land-frontier of some fifteen hundred miles towards Austria and Germany is for the most part the frontier of Russian Poland. This province, in its

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relation to the bulk of the Russian territory, has been picturesquely likened to "a huge bastion" wedged between German territory to north and west and Austrian territory to the south. But it is a political rather than a natural frontier, "marked out in somewhat arbitrary fashion when, after the turmoil of the Napoleonic wars, the map of Europe was being resettled at the Congress of Vienna." One may say roughly that this mass of Russian Poland projects between German and Austrian territories for about two hundred miles from north to south and two hundred and fifty miles from east to west. Russia has a group of fortresses in the plain of Poland, three of which are sometimes known as "the Polish Triangle," with a fourth fortress acting as a sort of outpost or "triangle" looking towards the German frontier.

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Warsaw (one of the world's greatest fortresses), Ivangorod, and Brest-Litovski are these three places of strength constituting a "triangle," the outpost fortress being Novo Georgievsk, at the confluence of the Vistula and Narev rivers. Then, along the latter river and the Niemen runs a chain of fortified river-crossings, supplying "a defence line for the region north of the Pripet marshes, and a well-protected concentration line for armies destined to operate against East Prussia." Finally, this well-planned fortress system is completed by a group of fortified towns between the marsh country and Galicia. It was the effective "screen" of this system of strong places that enabled the mobilisation of the Tsar's vast armies to be carried out so successfully.

With regard to the natural configura-

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tion of the wild and mostly desolate country constituting the wide area of the battle-ground, a few words of explanation will be useful. There is little high ground until one comes to the southern border of the great Polish plain, where the Carpathian range forms a natural rampart. To the north the ground falls away rapidly to the plain. There are numerous rivers and streams, and great tracts of forest-clad land. Eastward of the Upper Vistula a low rise of ground runs first northerly and then trends to the north-east, forming "the water-parting" between the rivers that flow to the Baltic and the Black Sea. Still eastward of this we come to the Marshes of Pripet, or Pinsk, to which I have already referred. Imagine to yourself some thirty thousand square miles of stream, pool, and swamp, by its very

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character utterly unsuited to the marching or fighting operations of a great army. In the northern region of the plain we find, between the Vistula, the Narev, and the Baltic Sea more wide-extended tracts of swamp-covered forest land, pools, lakes, and little rivers. Altogether, it is one of the worst countries, physically speaking, for the transport, much less the manœuvring, of masses of men, horses, and heavy artillery.

This historic battle-ground was once the old kingdom of Poland, the scene of some of the greatest political and military crimes and blunders of past ages. "Across the plain," writes the military critic whom I have already quoted, "winds the broad, sluggish stream of the Vistula. The great river is to this eastern land what the Rhine is to Western Europe. . . . On its banks, in the midst

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of the plain, stands Warsaw, the old capital of Poland and now the political, military, and business centre of the Russian province. There is only one other large town in Russian Poland—Lodz, not long ago a country village, now a busy industrial centre. This paucity of large towns is characteristic, not only of Russian Poland but of the whole Empire. The last census shows that in European Russia there are only twenty-four places that claim a population of over a hundred thousand. Russia is a country of agricultural villages. There are more than 150,000 of them between the Vistula and the Ural! The plain of the Vistula is not an absolute dead level, but there is nothing that can be called a hill. There are wide stretches of woodland, the refuge of the insurgent bands in the Polish risings of 1830 and 1863.

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Between the woods are open lands with many villages, rich lands with a deep soil somewhat primitively tilled." So much for the appointed battle-ground and the "lie of the land."

The victors of Lemberg did not long rest on their laurels. An order of the Day, promulgated by the Grand-duke Nicholas and phrased with all that regard for the cherished Slav ideals and traditions which has helped to make this war so popular in Russia, complimented General Russky and the gallant army under his orders. Another Order, addressed by the Grand-duke to the *Sokols*,[1] the Polish bands of partisans organised in Galicia, sternly admonished them for the use in warfare of dum-dum bullets, and informed them that in future they

[1] *Sokol* is a Slav word for "a hawk," or "a falcon."

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would be liable to be treated rather as malefactors than as *bona fide* combatants according to the usages of war.

The Tsar and Tsaritsa set a fine example by spending much of their time in visiting the hospitals and devising helpful schemes for the amelioration of the sufferings of the thousands of sick and wounded. Of the conduct of the military operations as a whole, the correspondent of a New York journal wrote home that " the Russians evidently have their heart in their work. They have profited greatly by the lessons of their operations in Manchuria, both as regards strategy and tactics. Every day in the field increases their efficiency, and will perfect the co-ordination between their invading bodies."

By a coincidence as dramatic as it must have been intensely interesting, the

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announcement in Petrograd of the brilliant victory of Lemberg synchronised with the Feast Day of Saint Alexander Nevsky, Russia's wonderful hero of the thirteenth century, who was also the first to beat back a Teutonic invasion of his country. Only on the previous evening, in fact, the people kneeling before the shrines in the churches had prayed to this saint: "O Alexander the Blessed, come to the aid of your kindred and give us victory over our enemies." And when, on the following day, the victory was celebrated with that impressive ritual which the Greek Church knows so well how to employ, doubtless many among the Slavs saw an immediate answer to their prayers.

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CHAPTER II

THE AUSTRIAN DEBACLE: FROM LEMBERG TO JAROSLAV

We shall now proceed to follow the fortunes of the Russo-Austrian campaign immediately after the capture of Lemberg in the early days of September. Such a substantial success naturally put the Russians in good heart. Rewards were judiciously distributed on the recommendation of the Grand-duke Nicholas, Generals Russky and Brussiloff each receiving that most coveted of decorations, the Cross of St. George. It was likewise officially notified that between August 17 and September 3, a period of rather more than a fortnight, the Tsar's

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forces operating against the Austrian host of General von Auffenburg had advanced no less a distance than 220 versts, or roughly 150 miles. During the same period there had been practically no lull in the fighting, which for sheer sustained fury would appear to have been little less sanguinary than that between the German and Franco-British armies in the West.

It was about this time that the *Daily Telegraph,* in an editorial setting forth the general situation of affairs after some five weeks of war, called attention to the influence being slowly but none the less surely exercised by the Russian field-armies. After pointing out that the crisis of a great war had worked wonders in the way of a more perfect understanding between the Russian and British peoples, the writer went on to say:

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"The extraordinary prowess of the Russian Army has already begun to draw the ordinary Briton out of his absorption in the military situation in France, and to keep him in mind of the fact that the arena of this war is not any one country, but the Continent of Europe. He realises more fully than before that every blow struck at the Central European Powers on their eastern frontier is, in the long run, as telling as any reverse inflicted upon them in the western theatre of war. But he ought to realise it more fully yet. The position is that the long series of Russian successes, culminating in the Austrian overthrow at Lemberg and Halicz, has cast the whole Austro-German war-plan into confusion, which may at this moment be affecting the German operations in France in the most serious degree. The main Austrian

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Army in Southern Poland is now being attacked with unsparing energy. Its situation is rendered desperate by the destruction of the Second Army at Lemberg, which lays open its right wing to assault by the victorious troops of General Russky. Should the great battle now raging end in another such defeat as has already been inflicted there will be nothing remaining in the field that can stay the Russian march to Berlin. The rapidity of the Russian mobilisation and of the movement of the Russian forces to the attack is one of the several absolutely vital things with which Germany did not reckon. The brilliancy of their performance in the field has surprised the enemy no less. Deeply involved as Germany is in the French campaign, dares she provide the heavy and immediate reinforcements for

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which her Ally is clamouring? Dares she, on the other hand, refuse them? That is, put simply, the fatal dilemma on the horns of which the monstrous ambition of German militarism is like to perish."

If this last pertinent question was not destined to be immediately answered, the military situation now began to be one of increasing menace for the Austro-German Allies. In war one is bound to get a vast amount of "claim and counter-claim" on the part of the contending nations. On September 6 the Tsar's Government took the step of publicly characterising as "wilful falsehoods" certain Austrian and German official reports of recent successes. It was claimed, in disproof of these statements, that in the region between the rivers Vistula and Bug the Russians had, up to

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and including September 4, captured many Austrian guns, 150 officers, and 12,000 men. It was added that, "having broken the Austrian resistance," the Tsar's army was already continuing its victorious advance southwards from Lemberg.

The Grand-duke and General Russky had determined that no rest must be given to the enemy's army already so badly beaten in front of the capital of Galicia. Scouting far to the flank, the Cossack cavalry already found themselves in the passes of the Carpathians. A German division intended to stiffen the Austrian resistance along this extended line was understood to have been badly cut up on the left bank of the Vistula; but details of the affair were vague. To the west of Krasnostaw, however, a whole Austrian battalion—the

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45th of the line—was cut off and surrounded, being compelled to surrender to the number of 1,500 men and nearly 50 officers.

The next Russian objective would obviously be the important and strongly fortified town of Przemysl, fifty-five miles west of Lemberg. But, before attacking this strong place of arms, it was essential to get possession of Mikolaiev. This point owes its strategical importance to the circumstance that it is situated at the junction of the railways to Lemberg, Jimacheff, and (via Stry) to the Carpathians. Entrenchments had been thrown up on both banks of the Dniester for the protection of the bridges crossing that river. With a mixed population of Poles and Jews of a little over 4,000, it had a garrison of some 10,000 men. Moreover, it was common knowledge that

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the Austrian authorities did not believe in the practicability of Mikolaiev being reduced either by investment or direct assault, owing to the deep marshes that surround the place for many miles. But, alas! a similar impregnability has been claimed for only too many of the fortresses involved in this war, which have held out for no longer than a few days. Mikolaiev was to prove no exception to the rule, although we are told that the fortress's guns were mounted in "armoured cupolas."

Apparently the place surrendered at discretion after a very moderate resistance. The garrison, forty heavy guns, and a great quantity of ammunition became the prizes of the victors; but the details of what must have been a brilliant feat of arms are conspicuously meagre. It is stated, however, that the

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defences included triple lines of barbed wire " and other obstacles."

We have now the spectacle of two separate Austrian armies, that of Galicia and that which was operating in Southern Poland, striving desperately to stem the tide that appeared to be setting dead against them.

By the second week of September public interest in Russia had become deeply centred in the plight of the latter army. It was by this time fighting a series of rearguard actions with its wary and well-handled opponents. Although the majority of well-informed military critics assumed the ultimate destruction of this army as a fighting force, the extent of the assistance it might receive from the German side could not be gauged with accuracy. Thus a special correspondent of the *Daily*

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Telegraph wrote from Petrograd on September 11:

"The theory is put forward that at any rate the greater part of the 300,000 men whom the Germans are known to have withdrawn from their western front, and who are supposed to have been replaced by the Landwehr and the Landsturm corps, have been directed to the assistance of the Austrians, and not to East Prussia. An army paper issued officially at the front for the information of the troops says that on September 5 and 6 the battle continued on the Austrian front. The Russian troops operating between Lublin and the Vistula had occupied the river Chodel. They had to deal with a well-entrenched enemy, and therefore the attack developed rather slowly. Moving from Krasnostaw, the Austrian

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force attempted to reach the railway line between Lublin and Cholm, to cut the communications between those two places; but the plan was frustrated by the battle of September 2 and 3 at Suchodol and other Russian counter-moves. The position of the Russians was, on September 6, much stronger, and Krasnostaw was in their hands. There were then also pretty plain signs of a general Austrian retreat."

These German reinforcements amounted, at all events, to one or two army corps, and with their co-operation hard fighting took place on September 8–9 along the entire front. It is significant that 10 per cent. of the prisoners taken on those days are said to have been Germans. The Austrian commander appears to have strengthened his left wing, now resting on the Vistula, at the

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expense of his right in order to attempt to hold the relentless flanking movement of General Russky. A large Austrian force was thrown for this purpose along a front running roughly from Lubisch to Komarno, which had formed a rallying-point for considerable numbers of the army broken up near Lemberg. Along this line they managed to entrench with some skill and elaboration, and Russky encountered a stubborn resistance in the task of turning them out, though it has been claimed on the Russian side that the enemy as a rule has been generally loth to wait for the bayonets to cross.

This Austrian conception of a counter-stroke of their heavily reinforced right wing, with the intention of driving Russky back upon Lemberg, was in the main a good one. It commenced on September 9, when, according to one who was in

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the firing-line, the Austrians essayed "repeated and stubborn attacks with the object of crushing the Russian left wing and getting round their right. These movements were met by vigorous counter-attacks, and in order to ease the pressure the army on the Vistula, and particularly that portion to the south of Lublin, was ordered to push forward and, if possible, strike at the enemy's rear. Accordingly the Russian forces in South Poland pressed on from the line Solez-Opole-Vichowe-Samostie-Komarow, and, after desperate fighting, drove the Austrians from their entrenched positions. On September 9 the enemy's resistance was overcome, and he retired all along the line, with the Russians in pursuit. In the battles of that and the preceding day the Russians took 150 cannon, several machine-guns, and 3,000 prisoners.

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"On the 10th, while the chase of the retreating Austrians was proceeding in this quarter, the Russians in the direction of Lemberg were called upon to sustain repeated assaults. These were, however, all repulsed with heavy loss, eight guns and more than four thousand prisoners being captured. Apparently the Austrians withdrawing from the Lublin province fought a rearguard action on the 12th, as mention is made of an obstinate battle on that day which ended with the rout of the enemy, who was compelled to abandon his wounded. Evidently in concert with this stand the Austrians to the west of Lemberg delivered three furious night attacks between the 11th and 12th. From the impetuosity with which the assaults were pressed home it was evident that they were a last despairing attempt to

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sweep back the onflowing wave of Russians."

In a word, this series of desperate attacks and counter-attacks resulted in the total failure of the Austrian army, though stiffened by its German supports, to "hold" their terrible opponents. But it was no easy victory. Both sides fought with devoted courage and stubborn tenacity. Much of the ground was cut up with marshy streams and belts of treacherous swamp land, and one of the harrowing features of this battle was that numbers of dead lay unburied among the morasses or half sunk in the shallow streams and hundreds of wounded wretches died among these abandoned dead, undiscovered by the peasants of the district until it was too late.

In the close fighting the Russian losses

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were necessarily heavy, but the Petrograd official estimates of the Austro-German casualties from the capture of Lemberg up to and including this hard-won triumph on the Vistula simply stagger the imagination, and suggest that the computation was somewhat loosely made. These were the figures:

Killed and wounded, 250,000 men.

Prisoners, 100,000 men.

Guns captured, 400.

The last of these figures is probably nearest the truth. It would include the numerous guns secured by the surrender of Mikolaiev, as well as those taken on the battle-field. In the great battle the Russian artillery is said to have outnumbered that of the enemy in the proportion of two to one, and the Austrians had to abandon many batteries among the marshes when the retreat began.

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Amongst these were some of their formidable field-howitzers.

Amongst the Russian corps commanders specially distinguished during these days of battle, and decorated by the Tsar with the Cross of St. George for his part in the victory, was the Bilarian Radko Dimitrieff. He has had a remarkable career. Born in 1859, he passed out of the Military School of Sofia as a lieutenant at the age of twenty, and then studied for a while in the Staff College at St. Petersburg. He had rejoined the Bulgarian army as a captain when there came the withdrawal of the Russian officers who held the higher commands, and the sudden attack by Servia. Dimitrieff, though only a captain, acted as a general at the victory of Slivnitza, and there laid the foundation of his career. The Bulgars called him "little

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Napoleon," partly on account of a certain personal resemblance to the "little Corporal," partly as a tribute to his genius for command. He served for ten years in the Russian army, and on his return to Bulgaria was appointed first chief of the General Staff, and then to the command of a district. In the war of the Balkan League he commanded the 3rd Bulgarian Army, won the first victory at Kirk-Kilisse and shared the after-triumphs of the campaign in Thrace. On the outbreak of the present war he at once offered his services once more to Russia.

In the official record of these operations special mention is made of the uniformly good work of the Cossack and other cavalry, who appear to have established as thorough a personal ascendancy over the enemy's mounted troops as did

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that of the Franco-British army in the western theatre of war.

A similar remark may be applied to the achievements of the Russian air-craft in this region. The Grand-duke seeks out for special commendation in this connection the work of Air-Scout Tkarchoff. While returning from a reconnaissance his machine was shot at and a bullet penetrated the oil-tank. With wonderful nerve and resource, the brave Tkarchoff managed to plug the bullet-hole with his foot, in that way stopping the flow of the oil and preventing a collapse. At last he was able to descend, though under heavy fire from the enemy, and eventually he saved his aeroplane with the help of two soldiers.

The Russian forward movement was very naturally speeded up by the quickened retirement of the foe. Having

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crossed the Lower San River without encountering any resistance, Russky's army entered the town of Gorodek and Mosciske, which brought them within one day's march of Jaroslav. When the Austrian Government reorganised the defences of Galicia more than twenty years ago it was at first intended to make Jaroslav instead of Przemysl the eastern stronghold of the province. The fortifications were begun and then left in an unfinished state, but on the outbreak of the war these incomplete works were taken in hand and made the basis of a strong system of entrenchments. It is an important place, some twenty miles north of Przemysl, and covering the junction of the eastern railways of Galicia with the main line to Cracow. Strong redoubts, to the number of more than twenty in all, had been erected on

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both banks of the San. The reduction of the place would greatly minimise the value of Przemysl to the Austrians and enable two railways to be used both in connection with the siege of that fortress and the operations against Cracow. The progress of the Russian advance had by this time—the third week of September—given them possession of other eastern lines of railway with large quantities of rolling-stock, tanks of naphtha, benzine, and large stores of wood and other material. On every side, as the advance converged upon Jaroslav, were seen evidences of the disorder of the recent Austrian retreat in the amount of arms and material of war abandoned in the swamps or by the roadside.

Anything like full details of the garrison of Jaroslav and its actual preparedness at the time of the onslaught are not

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available. This is partly owing to the Russian habit of lumping together the numbers of prisoners and guns captured at various points, and partly because a portion of the garrison succeeded in escaping. But it seems clear that a vigorous night-attack took two of the most important works, and that this rendered inevitable the early fall of the place.

In point of fact, the actual investment lasted only three days. Its reduction was semi-officially described as "a pleasant surprise," for it left open the Cracow road, while the undoubted strength and importance of a town of 20,000 inhabitants and protected by a score of well-equipped forts, could not be over-estimated. Moreover, the only railway to Przemysl now left open to the enemy was a small single line. The

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officers deemed to have been most distinguished in the success of the operation were Generals Ivanoff, Alexieff, and Dragomiroff, who were all decorated. Between September 11–14 the vast captures included a general, 535 officers, 83,531 men, 637 guns (38 German) 44 machine-guns, seven flags, and 823 ammunition-wagons.

With Jaroslav in its hands, the Tsar's army could now close up the ring of steel with which the greater prize of Przemysl was being encircled. In summing up the satisfactory results so far achieved, an eminent Russian critic, Colonel Shumsky, pointed out how utterly the enemy's plans had come to grief. "It was supposed," he said, "that the Austrian army approaching Ivangorod would have joined up with the Germans advancing from Posen and Thorn. By this means

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Western Poland would have been cut off, and there would have been a final development of the Austro-German forces on the line from Ivangorod and East Prussia to the sea, which is nearly a straight line. By moving out from the meridian of the East Prussian line, the enemy would have had the advantage of shortening the road of attack. This was very important for reasons of time. As the Austrian troops were completely beaten, that plan has broken down. The Austrians are retreating most probably to Cracow, and are attempting to arrange a new strategic front with the Germans for an attack in three echelons—the first from Eastern Prussia, the second from the line Tschensto-chau-Wjelun-Slessin, and the third from the district of Cracow."

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CHAPTER III

RUSSIA'S SUCCESS AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

THE armies of the Tsar had by the middle of September established so firm a foothold upon Austrian territory, and so remote were the chances of their being dislodged from it, that little surprise was felt at the issue of a manifesto addressed by the Grand-duke Nicholas to the inhabitants of the invaded country. It was circulated in all the nine languages of that wonderfully polyglot population, and the text of it was as follows:

"PEOPLES OF AUSTRIA-HUNGARY,—The Government of Vienna declared war on Russia because the great Empire, faithful to its historic traditions, could

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not abandon inoffensive Servia or permit her enslavement.

"Peoples of Austria-Hungary, — In making my entry into the territory of Austria-Hungary I declare to you, in the name of the great Tsar, that Russia, who has often shed her blood for the emancipation of nations from a foreign yoke, seeks only the restoration of right and justice. To you peoples of Austria-Hungary Russia also brings liberty and the realisation of your national hopes.

"During long centuries the Austro Hungarian Government sowed among you discord and hostility, for she knew that your quarrels were the basis of her empire over you. Russia, on the other hand, only aims at enabling each of you to develop and prosper, while preserving the precious heritage of your fathers, your language, and your faith, and allow-

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ing each of you, united to his brethren, to live in peace and harmony with his neighbours, respecting their national rights.

"Being sure that you will all lend your strength to the realisation of this end, I appeal to you to welcome the Russian troops as faithful friends who are fighting for your best dreams.

(Signed) "NICHOLAS, Commander-in-Chief and Aide-de-Camp General."

The present may be a convenient opportunity for pausing to consider briefly a few of the more picturesque "sidelights" of the war, while vast armies are mustering to the onslaught in Poland, in East Prussia, and in Austro-Hungary. A good impression was created throughout the world, as showing the spirit animating the Russian people and government in the prosecution of the struggle, by the prohibition of the sale of

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vodka "for ever" in the Tsar's dominions. Russia would henceforth be a sober country, and in the spirit of clear-minded cheerfulness and serenity would see this world-contest through to the bitter end. About the same time another Imperial edict seemed to imply that the Tsar was so well satisfied with the numbers of troops already mobilised, and with the steady progress being effected by the field-armies, that Russia's last line of men was not to be called to the colours.

Yet the masses of troops still available by the half-beaten Austrians were remarkable in the extreme. The calling up of their Landsturm gave them a million of fresh men with which to recoup the enormous wastage of the earlier battles. To this new million, an estimate of the astute Colonel Shumsky adds the further resources of the German allies. He

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reminds us that "On the list of the German Minister of War there are 4,300,000 trained men. Supposing that the Germans have lost 800,000 in the fields of Belgium, France, Eastern Prussia, and Galicia, then they must have 3,500,000 trained men, of whom 1,000,000 are in France. The remaining 2,500,000 are not occupied with France, and consequently can operate on the east front. But it must be remembered that if Austria and Germany have a population of 110,000,000 from which to derive their troops, their antagonists have not less than 220,000,000. In the battles of the present war strategy and tactics are playing a secondary part. All that counts is the numbers and the spirit of the soldier."

An Italian estimate of about the same date stated that by the month of October

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Russia would have fully three millions of men actively engaged in this complicated theatre of operations—an overwhelming avalanche of troops, flushed with victory and confident of the ultimate result. The general reader derived some idea of what the preparation for fight of the units of such an embattled host really means from a vivid account in the *Daily Telegraph* by Mr. Alan Lethbridge, who had been deputed by that journal to attend the headquarters of the world's most gigantic mobilisation. Mr. Lethbridge records, with many human touches, the gathering together of 30,000 Cossacks within four days after the outbreak of hostilities. He makes one realise the significance, to the mind of the local Muscovite peasant, of what is to him very essentially a holy war, because his "Little Father" the Tsar orders it. He

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tells, with rare lucidity and wealth of detail, how he saw the green-and-gold vested priests, with their ikons and huge crosses borne before them, blessing the great masses of men amid the prayers and tears of their womenkind, and solemnly impressing upon their auditors that this was no war of aggression into which their Tsar had felt himself forced to enter. He describes how one Siberian township alone (Omsk) contributed its quota of 75,000 conscripts, and how in a single day he saw at least a hundred thousand more being transported over one small section of the Siberian railway. He emphasises the extreme "teetotal" aspect of all that he saw and heard, remarking that perhaps nothing brought home to one as much as this the realities and possibilities of the true awakening of Russia. Incidentally, he gossips amu-

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singly as to a rumour of Japanese troops passing through Russian townships *en route* for "the front"—first cousin, this, to the equally fantastic story of Cossack soldiers having passed through England. The following brief extract from this correspondent's account may serve to illustrate the quiet, business-like aspect of the mobilisation:

"A galloping Cossack with a red pennon fluttering from his lance was our first intimation that Russia was at war. From the bridge of a steamer on the river Irtish we could watch him. His stout little pony easily kept abreast of our boat, and his method of operating was clearly visible. He would accost a group of his brethren garnering their harvest—for this is Cossack territory—there would be some gesticulation, horses would be seized and mounted, and within

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five minutes the harvest-fields of the great Siberian steppe would be denuded of their manhood. Such action was repeated with almost monotonous precision during that long summer day, and it was thanks to this organisation that on our arrival at Semipalatinsk, a steppe town some 600 miles from railhead, we found no less than 30,000 fully armed and equipped Cossacks. This within four days of the outbreak of hostilities."

Side by side with this may be read the testimony of Professor Pares of the Liverpool University, whose intimate knowledge of the country and its language admirably qualified him for the work of a correspondent with the Tsar's headquarters. Dr. Pares is just as emphatic as the correspondent just quoted on the subject of the enthusiasm and unanimity pervading all classes of the

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community with whom he came in contact. He pays a passing tribute to the high efficiency of Russia's hospital arrangements, to the fine and self-sacrificing labours of all from the highest to the lowest, and to the serenity and confidence manifested on every side. He saw the Grand-duchess Olga, sister of the Emperor, working as a Sister of Mercy, " under all the ordinary discipline and conditions," and heard how hard she had had to labour after the early battles of the campaign, when hospitals designed for the accommodation of 200 patients were compelled to accommodate at least 300 each. " One feels it is a great wave rolling forward with one spirit driving it."

Dr. Pares was present when the Tsar in person visited Vilna, riding through the streets quite unguarded. Vilna has for the most part a Polish population,

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and from all sides the Tsar was greeted with an enthusiasm that must have deeply touched and moved him. In the hospitals the Professor conversed with many of the wounded belonging to both sides. On the part of most of the Austrians, he says, he found a general disposition to believe that they had been thoroughly overmatched on the battle-field. A Russian lad of nineteen or twenty, who had been sent back home, not on account of wounds but because of physical overstrain, remarked almost with tears, "They are firing on my brother and not on me. That is not right—I ought to be where they all are."

A story worth interpolating here on account of its military significance has reference to a rumour that the German Emperor had addressed a letter to the

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Dowager-Empress of Russia, calling her "cousin," in an attempt to induce her to use her good offices with the Tsar in order to bring about peace. This missive eventually reached the headquarters of the Grand-duke Nicholas, who is said to have returned it to the Tsar with the laconic comment: "If you do, our armies will mutiny, and there will be a revolution in all the Russias." It is only a soldier's story, but it explains, especially in the final sentence, why Russia has beaten the Austrian, German, and Austro-German armies successively.

Nothing could be more noteworthy as emphasising the Russian record of initial difficulties triumphed over than the preponderance of Austro-German railway power in the vast war-area. General Kuropatkin, the Tsar's Commander-in-Chief in the war with Japan, had as far

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back as 1900 called attention to this marked superiority in the Central Powers' means of transport. Doubtless upon his initiative, the Russian railway lines along the Polish frontier were improved to a certain extent. But, as Austria and Germany were correspondingly busy, doubtless much of what Kuropatkin had written more than a dozen years before remained true in 1914—indeed, the celerity with which the enemy were enabled to rush masses of troops to all their frontiers must have been one of the earliest things to impress any student of the struggle. This is how Kuropatkin phrased his plea for a good deal more energy in the matters of railway development:

"By the expenditure of vast sums of money, Germany has made ready in the most comprehensive sense to march rapidly across our borders with an army

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of one million men. She has seventeen lines of railway (twenty-three tracks) leading to our frontiers, which would enable her to send to the front more than five hundred troop-trains daily. She can concentrate the greater part of her armed forces on our frontier within a few days of the declaration of war; while, apart from this question of speedy mobilisation, she has at her command far greater technical resources, such as light railways, artillery, ordnance, and engineering stores, particularly for telegraphs, mobile siege parks, etc., than we have. She has also made most careful preparation for a determined defence of her own border provinces, especially those of Eastern Prussia.

"The first-class fortresses of Thorn, Kŏnigsberg, and Posen are improved yearly, entrenched camps are built at

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the most important junctions, and material lies ready stacked for the rapid semi-permanent fortification of field positions. The crossing-places on the Vistula have been rapidly placed in a state of defence, as have also the various towns and large villages. The whole population, indeed, is making ready for a national struggle.

"In the matter of railway development the Austrians have also left us far behind. While they, by means of eight lines of rail (ten tracks), can run two hundred and sixty trains up to the frontier every twenty-four hours, we can only convey troops up to the same point on four lines. As any of their troops on the frontier would be in advance of the Carpathians, this range was formerly looked upon as an obstacle to retirement, and to communication between Galicia and the

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rest of Austria. But in the last ten years it has been pierced by five lines of railway, and preparations have been made to lay three more."

It will be perceived that General Kuropatkin cherished no optimistic illusions as to the ultimate aims and aspirations of Germany, neither did he believe that the shock could be much longer delayed, having regard to the immense burden of armaments.

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CHAPTER IV

EBB AND FLOW IN EAST PRUSSIA

GENERAL RENNENKAMPF'S brilliant raid into East Prussia—which admirably served its immediate purpose of causing the Germans to transfer great masses of men from the west to the east, thereby relieving the pressure upon the Franco-British allies in Northern France—had closed with the brave Rennenkampf's heavy defeat of Osterode, or Tannenberg, on the last day of August. Two days later had happened, as a counterstroke, General Russky's capture of the capital of Galicia with its thousands of prisoners and hundreds of guns, so that, in familiar language, "honours were easy."

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In point of fact, Rennenkampf, approved soldier in Europe as in Manchuria, recovered with astonishing rapidity from the severe set-back suffered by his army in the swamps of Osterode on August 31. While, as we have seen, that victory was causing General von Hindenburg to be acclaimed as the popular hero of the hour in Germany, Rennenkampf had the satisfaction of knowing that his defeat had not appreciably relieved the pressure upon the Austrian armies in the south.

On September 9 the army victorious at Osterode ten days before (and believed to consist of eleven corps) commenced a general advance along the East Prussian front into Russian Poland. For several days subsequent to his retreat, Rennenkampf had remained stationary along a line traversing the railway at right angles between Königsberg and Insterburg.

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This position he clung to tenaciously until noon of September 10, when the long-ranging shell-fire of the German fortress guns which were being used for the purpose, together with a powerful turning movement around their left flank, obliged the Russians to continue their retreat. They fell back on the 11th–12th in a northerly direction slightly east of Wirballen, where a fresh stand was made. Although the scene of action had now been transferred from German to Russian territory, the advantage was by no means wholly with the Teutons. They found themselves operating in a strange and unfriendly region, and one in which the railway system could not be of much use to them for the rapid transit of men and material, seeing that the German and Russian lines have different gauges. Moreover, Austria's military

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misfortunes might now be deemed to have eliminated that Power from the problem. And Rennenkampf was resolved not to fight another pitched battle until he could do so under favourable auspices.

Local incidents along this Russian-Polish frontier included the dropping of German bombs and proclamations into the town of Suwalki. By these bombs the railway-station and schoolhouse were damaged and one child was killed. The frontier town of Filipovo also suffered a partial bombardment. While Rennenkampf's headquarters were at Insterburg, certain of the inhabitants of that place were caught red-handed in the act of signalling movements of troops to their " friend the enemy," while in a few cases Russian troops were fired on from houses of the townspeople. Several of

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these irregular belligerents were put to death by sentence of a court-martial. Next morning a German aeroplane dropped in the Russian lines this audacious message addressed to Rennenkampf: "Your troops are shooting peaceful citizens. If this is done without your knowledge, stop it at once! If the troops are carrying out your orders, then know, General, that the blood of these innocent people falls on your head, and on yours alone."

It was not until September 17 that the Russian general's clever manœuvring was rewarded by his being able to resume the offensive after the enemy had not penetrated more than twenty-five miles into Russian Poland. On the evening of that day the Germans realised that their attempted outflanking of Rennenkampf's right was being checkmated

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by a vigorous counter-offensive. Very severe fighting took place at or near the junction of the railways between Kovno and Vilna, and at Stednicki, where the Niemen is joined by the Dubissa. The Russians held the banks of the latter tributary in force. By the 18th the enemy were falling back from Suwalki and four other townships which appear to have been the high-water mark of their advance. They lost four guns and many prisoners.

Having regard to the fact that a large proportion of the men of the German army corps employed here were troops that had been withdrawn from the western theatre of war, it is interesting to note that they are accused of having behaved with much lack of discipline along the line of route. Such accusations are common enough to all warfare,

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and the only point of interest here is that they certainly were for the most part troops drawn from the area of operations where so many allegations of "atrocities" have been preferred against them.

Roughly speaking, one continuous battle raged along the East Prussian borderland from September 25 to October 3. This has been styled the "Battle of Augustoff," otherwise Suwalki, from the name of the province or "government" covering the battle-ground. The battle began in the vast forest that covers miles of country on the Russian side of the frontier. Through these woodlands Rennenkampf retired, fighting a series of rearguard actions on a broad front. An episode of the battle was the attack of the German right on the fortress of Ossovetz, a place of some im-

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portance, as it guards a crossing of the river Bobr in the midst of a region of marshy forest.

The garrison met the attack by a night sortie against the German advance, which had got into difficult ground among the swamps and woods. A correspondent who was with the Russian force gives this account of the fighting:

"The Germans had not proceeded more than nine miles when they found that they could not move their guns a yard farther owing to the marshy nature of the ground. In this predicament they opened fire with their artillery, and then sent forward their infantry with numerous machine-guns. The latter got within four miles of the fortress, but they made no further progress.

"During the night the Russians made a sortie, and, marching by roads and

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paths of which the enemy were completely ignorant, they complete enveloped both the German wings. Imagining that they held all the practicable roads, the Germans had concentrated their attention on the fortress and neglected their flanks. When the enveloping movement became apparent, a fierce engagement ensued, the enemy being completely at a disadvantage. The fortress guns mowed them down on the open road, while the Russian infantry poured a devastating fire into their wings. The battle lasted thirty-six hours, and ended in the complete rout of the Germans, who fled in disorder along the Graevo road. All the German guns which had stuck in the marshy ground were captured."

Retiring through the frontier woods Rennenkampf fell back upon and recrossed the Niemen. It would have been

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well for Von Hindenburg if he had contented himself with having driven the invaders out of East Prussia. But, flushed with victory, and underrating the fighting power of his opponent, he endeavoured to force a way across the Niemen. By this time, however, the Russian mobilisation had long been completed, and Rennenkampf was reinforced by several army corps when he reached the right bank of the river. The German attempt to cross it in the face of superior numbers ended in a disaster. The attack was pushed with reckless daring, and simultaneously at many points attempts were made to construct pontoon bridges under the fire of the Russian artillery. Every attempt ended in failure. Hundreds of dead bodies floated down the stream, and the efforts of the German gunners to crush out the

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fire of the enemy's batteries were unavailing. At last, after incurring much useless loss, Von Hindenburg abandoned the attempt under the pressure of a Russian attack on his flank from the southward.

Once more there was fighting day after day in the forests of Augustovo, as Von Hindenburg's army fell back through the woods towards the borders of East Prussia, pursued by the victorious Russians.

Rennenkampf claimed that during these operations the losses of the Germans amounted to 60,000 men in killed, wounded, and prisoners. The scenes of desolation around Suwalki and Augustoff after this sanguinary fighting were pitiful in the extreme. Practically everything had been destroyed, so that they resembled towns of the dead. All bridges

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had been blown up, and but for embankments and broken telegraph-wires it was hardly recognisable that there had been a railway at all. Wrote a *Daily Telegraph* war correspondent of the unholy scene:

"On the fields one sees the ravages of artillery projectiles—deep, conical holes five or six feet in diameter. Here, too, one finds shrapnel cases, splinters of shells, skeletons of horses, fragments of blood-stained clothing, cartridge-pouches, blue-grey coats of German soldiers, empty schnaps and beer-bottles. In one trench there was a particularly large number of empty bottles. It is evident that the German soldiers invigorate themselves with alcohol before battle. Near one of these batteries of bottles was a soldiers' common grave. Along the road are many burnt houses and plundered farms.

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"Of entire villages, in some cases only blackened ruins remain. Inside the houses that have not suffered in this way nothing remains whole. Pillows and quilts have been ripped open and the down scattered about. Samovars, dented by heels of heavy boots, are lying about on the floor. Cupboards and drawers have been rummaged with bayonets.

"What the Prussians could not carry away they have spoilt. Whole forests have been hewed down or burnt. Wide areas have been cleared for fields of fire. Peasants' gardens have been stripped of their produce. Potatoes, carrots, and other vegetables have been dug up wholesale and carried off. Local inhabitants, mostly Lithuanians and White Russians, have been so terrified by the Germans that they hardly realise what has happened to them."

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The enemy next endeavoured to entrench and maintain himself upon a line running from Wirballen to Lyck; but on October 8 his flanks were enveloped after a fierce struggle, and the Russians marched into Lyck. They were now for the second time establishing themselves upon the soil of East Prussia—and this time with little likelihood of a somewhat demoralised foe being able to expel them in a hurry. For the German offensive along the Niemen had utterly failed.

At the time (October 8) when Rennenkampf followed up this triumph by driving the enemy out of Lyck, his troops had already been fighting for seven days and nights without a rest. But they were flushed with victory. This engagement of the 8th is likely to be known as the battle of Ratchka, from the name of the village on which the

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German right rested. It was ascertained that they had been reinforced with men and guns (several batteries being captured) from Königsberg. The rapidity of the advance seems to have had a staggering effect, and the enemy lost hundreds of his horses in the marshy boglands of the Suwalki province, leaving his heavy artillery, or much of it, to its fate.

A wounded Russian officer, in a description of the battle of Augustoff contributed to a Petrograd journal, pays a deserved tribute to the coolness, intelligence, and enthusiasm of the Slav soldier under fire. The troops, he says, were simply "chuckling with delight" on receiving an order to turn the enemy out of a position which could only be carried by great expenditure of life. With the utmost *sang-froid* they put the Germans

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to rout, then leaving them to the tender mercies of a particularly vigorous and merciless pursuit by the Cossack cavalry. Fresh enthusiasm was aroused by the appearance of General Rennenkampf, who rode on to the position to thank his gallant soldiers for the extraordinary exertions that had given them the well-worn field. The music of several bands then joined in the celebration, playing the beautiful Russian National Hymn to a perfect tornado of cheers from the weary but satisfied troops.

What a change had come over the scene within one month! A proud and unbroken enemy no longer retained a foothold upon Russian territory. Whether regarded as a serious invasion, or as a movement of co-ordination with the vaster invasion of Russian Poland now about to be described, the attempt had

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been signally beaten back in blood. "Whether," wrote an English critic of the situation, "the Russians intend to aim at Berlin or Vienna, is of minor consequence. The great point is that they seem able to do what they like and to choose their particular objective as they please. Nothing has been more exhilarating than the brilliant strategy of Petrograd. The Russian soldiers have proved not only their steady persistence—a quality which we always knew to be one of their principal assets—but also a rapidity of movement and a dashing spirit of attack with which the world was hardly prepared to credit them."

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CHAPTER V

THE DEFENCE OF THE VISTULA

GENERAL RENNENKAMPF received from the Tsar telegrams congratulating him upon his well-ordered retreat and his victorious counter-attack and resumed invasion of East Prussia. In this message the Tsar noted that, during the retreat, the Russian General had not left a single pound's weight of supplies to the enemy.

Before passing on to the story of the larger conflict in Central Poland, we may note some interesting incidents which occurred during this ebb and flow of the war on the East Prussian borders. One of these incidents shows that, with all

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their elaborate war training, the Germans were liable, from lack of ordinary precautions, to fall very easily into a dangerous trap. It occurred during the fighting around Wirballen, the little frontier town well known to all travellers from Western Europe to Russia as the point at which the railway from Ostend by Berlin crosses the frontier. The place was held at the time by the Russians, and was attacked by a German column.

After about an hour and a half's brisk fusillade, which was but weakly replied to, the Germans advanced, fearlessly and without further precautions, under the impression that their enemy had withdrawn. But on crossing the frontier-line into Russian territory, their feelings became too much for them, and, preluded by loud shouts of "Hoch!" they sang with fervour their familiar *Die Wacht am*

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Rhein. At that moment the Russians, who had remained carefully sheltered by their trenches all the time, poured in a deadly rifle-fire, backed by the immediate charge of a sotnia of Cossacks. Taken at a disadvantage and utterly surprised, it was said that not a man of the German force survived to recross the border.

The German Emperor's beautiful hunting-box at Rominten near Insterburg, where he had been wont to sojourn every autumn for the shooting of elk and other big game, fell into Russian hands. The following humorous extract is from a letter written home by one of the officers who had the good fortune to be temporarily quartered amid such luxurious surroundings:

"After a series of terrible battles, we are reposing on William's magnificent estate. Undreamt-of beauty is all round

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us. The place is splendidly equipped, so that we have at our disposal everything we could wish for, and we are riding his celebrated horses, and enjoying delicious dinners prepared by his man cook. Especially beautiful is the park, with its glorious shady avenues. It swarms with rare animals, and birds are flying free everywhere. By the way, our soldiers have caught a William parrot in the park. It speaks excellent German, but our men are teaching it their own language, and it is learning to address its Imperial master with compliments I should blush to repeat in company."

Another isolated but interesting incident of this Prusso-Polish frontier fighting was the destruction near Mlawa, on September 5, of the Zeppelin airship Z 5, —the second Zeppelin known to have been brought down in this region since

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the commencement of hostilities. The Z 5 had been cruising in the neighbourhood for several days, and it was not until the date mentioned that her movements were observed to be growing very irregular and uncertain. She tried hard to shape a course for her own frontier, but finally collapsed in some fields. It was then found that her envelope had been literally riddled by Russian bullets. Her crew managed, however, to blow up the airship, whose commander, severely wounded, requested to be placed out of sight behind a haystack, so that he "might not witness the end of his dear Zeppelin."

A possible explanation of Von Hindenburg's advance to the Niemen was that the German General Staff hoped by a serious threat in this direction to lead the Russians to diminish the pressure upon

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Galicia in order to reinforce their right. At the time of the operations Colonel Shumsky, perhaps the best-known military writer in Russia, pointed this out, and at the same time suggested that the menace from East Prussia could have no serious result. "Will the Germans," he asked, "compel us to abandon the operations in the Carpathians and throw our forces across to the Niemen, or shall we compel the Germans to restrict their activity on the Niemen, and fling themselves into Cracow and Galicia to save Austro-Hungary? The advance of the Germans from East Prussia cannot have any decisive object. A lightning-like stroke could only be delivered if the Germans were finished with France and could move all their forces against us."

It appears that something was done to draw reinforcements from the western

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theatre of war for the German armies on the Polish frontier. Reserve and Landwehr troops organised since the declaration of war were moved in the same direction, and, according to Russian estimates of a subsequent date, by the end of September the Germans had concentrated twelve army corps of about 400,000 men on the frontier in the centre about Thorn and Posen. It appears, however, that at the time the Russian Staff did not realise that this formidable concentration was in progress, and thought that their opponents were putting forth their chief efforts on the two flanks of the long curved line northwards—for the struggle in East Prussia, and southwards for the defensive campaign in Galicia.

The Germans, however, were preparing for a serious stroke in the centre of the Polish theatre of war, and, despite his

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failure on the Niemen, the chief command of this great effort was entrusted to General Hindenburg. The fame he had acquired by his expulsion of the enemy from East Prussia had only been slightly overclouded by the defeat on the Niemen, and it was thought that the German generals in East Prussia could be safely left to defend against Rennenkampf's farther advance the wilderness of forest, marsh, and lake which forms the natural barrier along the frontier of the province.

The German plan was to abandon the mere passive defence of their frontiers, assume the offensive, and strike a blow directly against Warsaw and the group of fortresses beyond the Vistula that form the citadel of the Russian power in Poland. The German armies were to advance from the borders of the provinces of Posen and Silesia in a con-

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verging march upon Warsaw. The left column from Thorn was to advance along the south bank of the great bend of the Vistula which runs north-westward from Novo Gorgievsk by Plock. The central column from the Posen frontier was to march on Lowicz and the great factory town of Lodz—after Warsaw the largest place in Poland—the third column, which had already occupied Czenstochowa, just inside the Russian frontier towards Silesia, was to protect the flank of the advance and march on the Vistula in the direction of Ivangorod. A fourth column was to march on Kielce, forming the link with an Austrian advance through Northern Galicia towards the river San, which was intended to re-occupy Jaroslav and raise the siege of Przemysl.

The country through which the line of

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advance lay was the undulating Polish plain, a district with many clumps and belts of forest, and almost destitute of good roads. Once the weather broke, at the end of autumn, much of the ground would be reduced to a marshy condition that would make it impassable until the first frost of winter hardened it again. The German Staff hoped to carry through the campaign while the region was everywhere practicable, and, even if Warsaw were not captured, to make the Vistula their line of defence, where, having secured the railways behind them, they might hope to hold their own on a front shorter by many hundred miles than the long curving frontier of their own territory.

It was expected that the first movement into the Polish plain would have the result of forcing the enemy not only

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to abandon the advance already begun towards Cracow, but to evacuate a considerable part of the ground they had overrun in Galicia, and at the same time to withdraw some of their forces from the East Prussian border. German reports went to show that the enemy had no large forces in the country between the middle Vistula and the Posen-Thorn frontier. The first stage of the German advance would, therefore, not be likely to meet with any very serious opposition.

Why, it may be asked, had not the Russian military authorities taken fuller precautions, in the earlier days of the war, for safeguarding the Polish territory from invasion and spoliation? Why had not the immensely long and valuable line of the river Vistula in particular been occupied in heavy force at the time of the mobilisation in August? A semi-

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official statement of mid-October replied definitely to these criticisms. It was pointed out that the consideration was a purely military one. It was a fundamental rule of warfare to sacrifice everything of lesser importance to the main issue. Thus, the first "impudent invasion" from the German side had demanded a large transfer of troops. Next the Austrian concentration in Galicia, and their attack in the Lublin district, had needed a big force in that quarter. Thirdly, the invasion by way of Eastern Prussia had required substantial means to deal with and crush it. "This temporary victimisation of the Vistula district is the outcome of a praiseworthy decision of our strategy. Now the situation is different, and strategic and other aims coincide upon the Vistula until the enemy has been finally beaten."

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The Defence of the Vistula

Intense enthusiasm was aroused throughout Russia by the announcement that the Tsar would proceed in person to the fighting area. In front of the Winter Palace at Petrograd, thousands of students and others paraded and demonstrated in honour of their "Little Father," as well as to celebrate news of the victories in Galicia and East Prussia.

The German columns met with little resistance in their advance across the Polish plain. Lodz was occupied, and the two northern columns gained touch east of the town and advanced on a wide front between the northern bend of the Vistula and its tributary, the Pilitza, their objective being Warsaw. The right moved forward through Kielce and Radom against Ivangorod. According to German accounts, the advancing armies were joined by large numbers of

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the peasants, who welcomed them as deliverers; but the Russian story is that the people fled in terror before the invaders.

We have to depend during the war for our news of what is happening in Poland almost entirely upon Russian accounts official and non-official. The German wireless reports give only the briefest outline of the official view of the situation taken at Berlin, and these reports are often cut down by our own censorship. The few reports from Berlin that were allowed to be published in England contained, it is true, some references to a victorious advance of the Austro-German armies into Poland in the first days of October. But, at the time, these were treated as fictitious claims of success, for it seemed strange that, in the numerous telegrams that came from Russian sources,

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there was not a word of any important events in the central theatre of war. Official news told of fighting on the East Prussian border and in Galicia, and non-official reports were full of detailed statements as to the complete collapse of the Austrians, an invasion of Hungary through the Carpathians, attacks upon Przemysl that had reduced the fortress to desperate straits, and steady progress in the direction of Cracow.

It was, therefore, a surprise to every one when, towards the end of the second week in October the official bulletin from St. Petersburg admitted that Von Hindenburg had forced his way up to the left bank of the middle Vistula and overrun all Western Poland—this, too, at a time when all the rest of Europe believed that the Germans were still on the frontiers of Poland and Galicia, and busy preparing

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the fortresses of Thorn and Posen for a siege. It was afterwards explained that the Russian retirement to the Vistula was a deliberate "strategic" movement intended to lure the Germans to destruction. But it is fairly certain that the Russians had sent such large masses of men northwards and southwards for the operations in East Prussia and Galicia, besides providing for an army they were concentrating on the Black Sea coast and the Caucasus, that their forces in Central Poland had been considerably reduced. During Von Hindenburg's advance they were busily engaged in reinforcing the army on the middle Vistula and in the Polish triangle of fortresses, and for this purpose they drew in several army corps from their left.

Weakened by this withdrawal, the Russian army in Galicia gave way before

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the advance of the Austrian armies on the German right. Jaroslav was abandoned, the siege of Przemysl was temporarily raised, and General Brussiloff concentrated his forces to protect Lemberg from recapture.

The right column of the German advance, pushing forward through Radom, reached the river Vistula near Ivangorod, tried to force a passage over it below the fortress, and attacked the outlying defences of the place, The columns of the left and centre, under Von Hindenburg's personal command, penetrated to within a few miles of Warsaw, where at last they met with serious opposition. The Grand-duke Nicholas began to push a considerable force westward from the city to protect it from even a temporary occupation, while his main line of defence lay along the right bank of the Vistula

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above and below the city. It was early on the morning of October 11 that the thunder of the guns told the inhabitants of Warsaw that a great battle had begun at the very gates of their city.

During the preceding days there had been rumours not only that the Germans were approaching in great force, but that the Grand-duke was about to evacuate the city.

The wealthier classes of Warsaw are largely made up of those who hold government positions, or whose interests are, in one way or another, closely connected with the existing Russian regime, and there was something like a panic as the rumour spread that the place might soon be in the hands of an invader. The alarm was increased by the sight of German aeroplanes circling high over the houses and dropping bombs into the

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streets. One of these aeroplanes had an accident to its engine and fell on the estate of Count Briansky in the suburbs of Warsaw. The aviators were murdered by a mob of peasants before they could be taken prisoners by the troops.

For three days Warsaw could hear the cannon thunder close at hand. Indeed, at first, it seemed to be coming nearer and nearer on the south side of the city. The arrival of long trains of wounded men hour after hour told that the fight was a costly one, and this fighting close to Warsaw was only part of an engagement stretching out upon an enormous front along the Vistula. The Grand-duke was, however, holding his own and using the central position in front of Warsaw as a starting-point from which to drive a way into the German line, while along the river the enemy were wasting their forces

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in desperate attempts to effect the crossing.

The Siberian Army Corps, now in action for the first time in Europe, proved themselves fighting men. Their attack turned the scale in the centre. The great wedge pushed forward from Moscow began to tell upon the German resistance, and as it gained more and more ground new masses of troops were brought across the river to extend the region of the close fighting. The weather had broken, and the battle was fought out under cloudy skies and amid driving showers of sleety rain.

On October 14 Warsaw heard the cannon thunder less loudly. The enemy's centre was being driven steadily back with the loss of thousands of prisoners and many guns. Higher up the Vistula towards Ivangorod the German attempts

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to gain a footing on the east bank had also failed.

According to the *Utro Rossii*, elaborate attempts to cross the Vistula on rafts (after aeroplane reconnaissance) took place at two points, between Ivangorod and Sandomir and between Ivangorod and Warsaw. In the first of these attempts the Russians carefully waited until two battalions had crossed and then fell on them with the bayonet, while the rafts were cruelly raked with rifle-fire. In the second instance, the enemy were similarly uninterrupted while throwing their pontoons across. Then a burst of shrapnel fell upon the masses as they were in the act of crossing. The river ran red with blood, hundreds of corpses floated down the stream, and but few escaped. On the following day a tremendous artillery duel lasted for several hours. The Rus-

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sians got the range and established their superiority, as was evidenced by the smoke and flames beginning to rise from the miserable villages within the enemy's position, and by the slackening of his fire. The scene was one of sublime horror. The sky for miles was lit up by the blaze of the burning buildings and by the myriads of bursting projectiles. It was the beginning of the end of the invasion of Russian Poland.

Warsaw itself "returned to the normal" on October 14. The frightened people had been a good deal dispirited and disheartened by what had appeared to them like a falling-back of their defending army, and many of them had, indeed, already fled from the threatened city. They were further discouraged by the dissemination of a German proclamation announcing that the enemy would be in

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Warsaw "by the 18th"—instead of which, by the date named the Kaiser's army was in full retreat. Now, however, the aspect was brighter. Numbers of ragged and dejected prisoners (but many of them Poles) were being brought into Warsaw daily. Institutions and shops that had been shut up were reopened. The utmost animation prevailed where yesterday there had been pessimism and dejection. Cheering crowds gave cigarettes, apples, milk, and bread to the Russian troops as they marched past with faces set towards the German frontier. The agony of Warsaw had endured for five or six days. All that time the outside world had watched and waited without being satisfied, so rigid was the Russian censorship of news.

If the policy of "waiting for the enemy" had so far been crowned with

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substantial success, much remained to be achieved. In the densely wooded country stretching away from the Polish capital to Petrikau, the fighting had been particularly deadly, several villages being taken and retaken. As far as could be ascertained, the German troops suffering the most heavily in this quarter were the 17th and 20th Corps. One Russian regiment alone lost three commanding officers in rapid succession. The behaviour of the Siberian troops under fire was especially gallant and noteworthy. With trenches full of water and the conditions generally depressing, these fine troops held on to one position during eight days of fighting, sometimes hand to hand, and always decimated by shell-fire. This place was swampy ground on the left bank of the Vistula. It was known from the prisoners that the Ger-

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man army detailed for the great movement upon Warsaw contained many of the Kaiser's finest battalions. It was hoped to smash in the Russian centre while simultaneously dealing heavy blows both against Ivangorod and in Galicia. Apart from its great strategical value, due consideration was given to the moral results of the capture of Warsaw.

We have seen in part how this plan miscarried. I propose now to piece together a few missing links with the assistance of one of the longest and most remarkable despatches sent during the whole war—by Mr. Granville Fortescue to the *Daily Telegraph.* Mr. Fortescue suggests, as a starting-point for the phase when the Germans' offensive "exhausted itself" and their complete defeat became inevitable, October 19–20. Close pressure upon the enemy's left wing

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caused the huge front to swing round, running westerly instead of north and south. A comparison is made of the "luring" of the enemy towards Warsaw with the "luring" of Napoleon's legions towards Moscow a century before. For, says this writer, "the Russians do not play by the German rules—they look on Nature as their first and strongest ally. With the elements on their side, batteries of 17-in. howitzers dwindle into insignificance." There were stories also of friction between the high commanders on the Austro-German side; but as to this the correspondent could of course say nothing very definite, particularly as his information would of necessity be derived from prejudiced sources. Mr Fortescue continues:

"On October 20, when the battle of the Vistula was at its height, the Ger-

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man Austrian line of communications stretched across 150 miles of Russian territory. On that day the German attack exhausted itself. The tide of battle ebbed. The Russian right swept round, discouraged the enemy, and rolled him away from the Vistula. Warsaw no longer trembled under the salvos of the enemy's artillery. The Russian cheers of victory echoed sixty miles away.

"The Germans, battling for the railroad bridges across the Vistula at Ivangorod, paused in their fight. In that pause they could almost hear the tread of the oncoming Russian legions. At Radom the Crown Prince and his staff hastily ordered up reserves to meet this new menace.

"For four days victory hung in the balance. Then the German resistance began to crumble. The force of numbers

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began to tell. At Radom steam was up on the engine that pulled the Crown Prince's private car. Already the German army which had threatened Warsaw was in full retreat along the south margin of the river Pilitza. Under the threat of attack from this flank the Germans and Austrians holding the Kosenitze and Ivangorod front fell back, after offering a most desperate resistance. When the troops of the Kosenitze-Ivangorod line were smashed the German-Austrian position south along the Vistula, from Nowa Alexandria to Sandomir, could no longer hold. On November 5 the main body of the Austrians began to fall back precipitately. A final effort made here to dam the Russian tide was in a manner an heroic waste of force."

This account is supplemented by the Russian official report, which conveni-

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ently divides the two later phases of the German overthrow into October 23–27, and October 28 to November 2. In the first of these phases the enemy battling in the Kosenizy - Ivangorod zone retreated on finding himself being outflanked by way of the river Pilitza. In the second, the German resistance along a line Novaya-Alexandria similarly broke down utterly.

This further retirement found them, a day or two later, endeavouring to hold on to the town of Kielce along a forty-mile line of entrenchments. The Russians reconnoitred this position by night and attacked at dawn. A frightful conflict, often hand to hand, lasted the whole of a day and night. At last the defenders were routed with a loss of 2,400 men and 40 officers captured, with a howitzer, 10 light guns, and 11 machine-

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guns. These prisoners belonged to the 20th Corps, the Landwehr, the Guard Reserve Corps, and the 1st and 2nd Austrian Corps. Here Austrian and Prussian fought shoulder to shoulder.

Throughout November 2 the Austrians were fighting hard for the retention of the important town of Sandomir on the Vistula, which they had occupied and protected with a triple line of entrenchments and wire entanglements "carrying alternating electrical current." The Russians stormed all three lines by irresistible bayonet charges. Nevertheless, in the hope of recovering the works the defenders brought up heavy reserves that night; but all in vain—attack and counter-attack ending in their total discomfiture with awful losses. They left all their sick and wounded behind them, whom the Russians found, together with

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much booty of all descriptions, on their victorious entry into Sandomir. In two days they captured from the Austrians nearly 5,000 prisoners, 18 field-guns, and 24 machine-guns.

The main German army was now in such rapid retreat that it was obvious to all that the scene of operations would shortly be shifted to their own territory. It was only possible to guess at the losses in the three weeks' Titanic struggle for the possession of the capital of Russian Poland and the long line of the Vistula—losses which, if vast on the Russian side, must be reckoned as simply colossal on that of the Austro-German allies, *plus* in their case thousands on thousands of prisoners and the hundreds of guns taken.

The scheme of the onslaught upon the Vistula was generally condemned by critics not only of Russian, but of Euro-

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pean repute, it being pointed out that if the conception of that offensive had been the avoidance of a battle around Cracow and on the plains of Silesia, such a conflict had merely been postponed—to take place under circumstances far less favourable to the German plans. Rightly or wrongly, General von Hindenburg came in for not a little of this adverse criticism, it being pointed out that, although the report might be correct that the Crown Prince had been nominally in command, Von Hindenburg was in all probability the guiding spirit of the move.

On the other hand, not one but several of Russia's military leaders had enormously increased their reputations. These included General Russky—who had led the masterly advance along the river Pilitza—General Ivanoff, and, most of all, of course, the Grand-duke Nicholas him-

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self. As Mr. Granville Fortescue phrases it, Nicholas Nicolavitch is a Russian of the old school. He is known to be a strict disciplinarian, but "when one carries the responsibility of one-sixth of the world on his shoulders one cannot listen to excuses. In the army he is the law and the word." While the prolonged agony of the Warsaw battles was taking place the Tsar conferred upon the Grand-duke that prized decoration the Order of St. George. Lesser grades in the same decoration went to his skilful Chief-of-the-Staff, General Yanuskevitch, and to Quartermaster-General Daniloff. The Tsar also similarly rewarded Captain Martinoff for acts of deep devotion and gallantry. While not yet recovered from a wound, this brave man insisted upon taking over the command of Turret Hill in the defence of the fortress of Ossovetz,

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where he remained for three days in an exposed position of the utmost danger and under a continuous hail of fire. When a shell dropped close to the magazine and threatened to blow it up, Martinoff personally headed a party to the scene of the danger and extinguished the flames.

During the time of crisis Warsaw did not entirely escape the bomb-throwing from aeroplanes which has been such a feature of the German aggressive in both theatres of war. One such messenger of death (October 19), or, rather, several such, killed nine and wounded no fewer than fifty-six of the civilian population, including several women and children. Then was witnessed the novel spectacle of the people mounting the roofs of their houses and taking "pot-shots" at the deadly Taube machines, one of which

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had been instrumental in killing or maiming upwards of sixty non-combatants.

It was only natural that victory for the Russian arms should have enhanced the already high enthusiasm and patriotism of the Tsar's peoples. It was known that there had long existed in German minds a profound contempt for the Muscovite military organisation, Postdam professors of war having clung to the belief that they were opposed to a system which was faulty and calculated to break down, especially after the adverse verdict of the war with Japan in 1904–5. But such critics had not reckoned with the complete reorganisation of the Russian military " machine " carried out in 1910, nor yet allowed for the vastly improved personnel of the Russian rank and file. Of this last-mentioned point, one of the war correspondents wrote :

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"The Russian 'Tommy,' or, as he is called here, Ivan, son of Ivan, is a most impressive-looking soldier. Nearly all over 5 ft. 6 in. in height, and of splendid build, they recall certain Irish regiments in size and swagger. For as soon as the peasant has donned the long, light, terra-cotta-coloured overcoat and learned to set his cap at a jaunty angle, he assumes the martial swagger. The Russian military overcoat is the best bit of soldiers' wearing apparel I have seen in any army. Not only is it smart in cut and colour, but eminently practical. No better protection aganst the winter cold could be devised. I used to think that the English military overcoat was the best made; but the Russian is better. It is not necessary to emphasise the importance of having a good covering in Russia in winter."

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It was stated, apparently with authority, that some of the German prisoners arriving at Vilna were lads of sixteen years of age. Among stories of "atrocities" vouched for was one to the effect that an enemy patrol, having captured a Cossack trooper, flung the poor wretch on to a fire and literally roasted him alive! It was averred that a Russian officer, doubting the reliability of the horrible story, caused the charred remains of the Cossack to be disinterred. But there were counter-charges of atrocities preferred against the Russians, and on both sides some very wild talk on the subject. In a war of such inveterate bitterness as this had now become one must perforce suspend judgment.

The official *communiqué* upon the defence of the Vistula and the complete defeat of the invasion of Russian Poland

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closed with these impressive words: "We owe thanks for our victory to the unfailing grace which God has shown to the superhuman heroism of our warriors, of whom Russia may be justly proud. The victory which has been achieved makes it possible for our troops to set about the solution of fresh problems, the grappling with which commences a new period of the war."

At Radom—now in Russian hands again after a month's occupation by the enemy, and where his invasion plan is supposed to have been perfected—the following proclamation to the Polish inhabitants was issued by the commander of a Russian army corps: "Poles! Our wounded officers and soldiers, and also our prisoners who had fallen into the hands of the enemy and had passed through the town and province of Ra-

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dom, speak with deep gratitude of your cordial treatment of them. You have tended the wounded, fed the starving, and sheltered from the enemy those escaping from captivity. You have given them money, and guided them to our lines. Accept from me, and from all ranks of the army entrusted to me, warm and hearty thanks for all your kindness, for your Slavonic sympathy and goodness."

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CHAPTER VI

THE SIEGE OF PRZEMYSL—THE STRUGGLE ON THE SAN

"WHEN Przemysl falls," wrote Mr. Granville Fortescue in the *Daily Telegraph*, "the name of Radko Dimitrieff will ring around the world." It was not, however, the immediate object of General Dimitrieff and his coadjutors to bring about a hurried capitulation of this commanding fortress and its 30,000 defenders. The Russian headquarters in Galicia could well afford to play a waiting game and let the grim business of starvation do its work.

In our second chapter we brought down the record of events on the Galician theatre of war to the important capture

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of Jaroslav by the Russians on September 21, after only three days' investment. The Colonel Shumsky from whom I have already quoted points out the enormous significance of this capture when taken in conjunction with the all-round breakdown of the Austro-German conception. That plan assumed, he opines that Western Poland would have been cut off, and there would have been a last development of the Austro-German forces from Jaroslav over Ivangorod and East Prussia seawards. From "the Baltic to the Carpathians" was certainly the grandest of grand conceptions—instead of which, we have the well-nigh incredible estimate of *a million* Austrian troops put out of action in less than two months of war, and the frank statement by one of their general officers that "the enemy is too much for us."

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It would appear that the Austrian forces operating along the line Lublin-Holm in August to September included the 3rd, 11th, 12th, and portions of the 7th, 13th, and 14th Army Corps, with five cavalry divisions. But in one day's fighting alone they are known to have had 20,000 casualties, the mobility and rapidity of the Russian offensive seeming quite to have paralysed them. After Lemberg, the capture of Halicz and later still of Jaroslav rendered their position still more unenviable. As Professor Pares points out, "the chief harm which Germany and Austria could inflict in a war against Russia was to conquer Russian Poland, whose frontier made defence extremely difficult. Regarding this protuberance as a head, Germany and Austria could make a simultaneous amputating operation at its neck, attacking

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the one from East Prussia and the other from Galicia. But the German policy, which had other and more primary objects, precipitated war with France and threw the bulk of the German forces westward. Thus the German army in East Prussia kept the defensive, and Austria was left to make her advance from Galicia without support." We have seen in part how that forlorn advance was destined to be beaten back in blood.

Perhaps never in the history of war have more lies, false rumours, and unintelligent anticipations got into print than in connection with the momentous event happening in Galicia consequent upon the "pleasant surprise" of the capture of Jaroslav on September 21. As that important success, taken in conjunction with the huge battles in East Prussia and Russian Poland, certainly

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implied the imminent danger of Przemysl, we heard all sorts of things about the fate of that great fortress. It was on the eve of capture, it was on fire, most of the forts were taken—the garrison was driven to the inner defences, etc., etc. In short, Przemysl was by the many-headed held to have been captured, or at all events isolated, quite early in September. But the powerful German advance into Poland, with the co-operating Austrian movement on their right in Galicia, had put the fortress for the moment out of danger. Jaroslav's fall was a decided nail in the coffin of Przemysl, but no more.

This fortress—whose remarkable orthography was the subject of a sly little joke by Mr. Lloyd George in a speech on the war—is stated to have been insufficiently garrisoned (30,000). It has not a

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large civil population, and after September 21 the extreme step was taken by the Commandant of expelling all persons who had not provisions for a siege of three months. The retreating Austrians did not have time to destroy the bridges over the San, and the almost complete isolation of Przemysl was rendered more acute by the announcement that, "as the crow flies," the Russian advance-guard was not more than 135 miles from Cracow itself! The general line of the Austrian retreat was mainly towards that famous and historic city, where the hospitals and houses were already crowded with their thousands of wounded. Such a retreat would link them up to the right wing of their German allies, when they would become a more component part of the Kaiser's forces. Comparisons were freely bandied about, in which the ener-

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getic Russian pursuit was likened to Kutusoff's chase of Napoleon's Grand Army in 1812, and to Lee's pursuit by Grant in the American Civil War in 1864. In any event, the crumbling away of the Austrian defence of Galicia was now so significant as to dwarf minor considerations.

The retreat towards Cracow was marked by a good deal of demoralisation and by the plundering of the estates of some of the Polish aristocracy. The capture of the railway junctions of Debica and Chyrov by the conquering foe further isolated the threatened fortress, while the passage of the Carpathians by way of the Uszok Pass was planting the Russian army firmly upon Hungarian soil, where there were no great places of strength to be reduced. The tables had been turned with a vengeance, and the in-

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vasion of Austro-Hungary was an accomplished fact. What would Germany do in face of these changed conditions? became for a week or so the burning topic among strategists and lookers-on at the great game.

Coincident, presumably, with the expulsion of most of the civil population, the garrison of Przemysl were placed upon three-quarter rations. If one thing was humanly more certain than another it was that, except by a miracle, relief could not reach them—they gleaned as much from their wireless communications with the retreating arm, the Russians not having yet succeeded in destroying the wireless station.

Late September and the first part of October was occupied by the Russians in the two main directions of pressing with great masses of troops the Aus-

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trian retreat towards Cracow, and in completing with slow but sure tenacity the investment of Przemysl, where the thousands of mouths to feed were now placed upon half instead of three-quarter rations. A series of sanguinary combats went on almost uninterruptedly with the beaten Austrians, who always fought bravely enough, but invariably continued their retirement with heavy losses in men and material of war. The great events in Russian Poland already narrated were naturally exercising their indirect influence in this quarter.

Professor Pares was privileged to visit the Galician battle-fields in October, and his impressions are of all the more interest from the fact that we have little else save scrappy official reports to go upon. Mr. Pares visited Galich, Stryl, and Rava-Ruska, and of the latter place he writes :

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"Our visit to Rava-Ruska presented much greater military interest; we drove round the south, east, and north front of the Russian attack on this little town and very valuable explanations were given by an able officer of the General Staff. On the southern front near the station of Kamionka Woloska, where there were lines of trenches, the deep holes made by bursting Russian shells, and sometimes filled with water, lay thick together.

"The eastern front was more interesting. Here there were many lines of rifle-pits, Austrian, Russian, or Austrian converted into Russian. The Austrian rifle-pits were much shallower and less finished than the Russian, which were generally squarer, deeper, and with higher cover. An officer's rifle-pit just behind those of his men showed their care

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and work, as was indicated in letters written just after the battle. Casques of cuirassiers, many Hungarian knapsacks, broken rifles, fragments of shrapnel, potatoes pulled up, and even such oddments as an Austrian picture postcard, were to be found in or near the rifle-pits.

"These wide plains, practically without cover, were reminiscent of Wagram. A high landmark was a crucifix, on which one of the arms of the figure was shot away; underneath it was a 'brothers' grave,' containing the bodies of 120 Austrians and twenty-one Russians. Another cross of fresh-cut wood marked the Russian soldiers' tribute to an officer: 'God's servant, Gregory.' Close to one line of trenches stood a village absolutely untouched, and in the fields between stood a picturesque group of villagers at their field-work, one in an Austrian

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uniform and two boys in Austrian shakos."

He noted that cavalry had played but an inconspicuous part in this desperate fighting. The Russians, he says, were always attacking. They felt the supremest confidence in the power of their artillery ("though the proportion of field-guns to a unit is less numerous on the Russian side than on the German or Austrian"), and, when questioned as to the enemy's rifle-fire, they would reply, in characteristic Tommy Atkins fashion, "Oh, nothing striking." Many men told Mr. Pares that they did not believe the Austro-German liked fighting at close quarters with the bayonet as much as the Russians did. The one thing for which the latter felt respect was the hostile heavy artillery, though claiming that their own field-artillery was superior.

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Their extraordinary endurance in the trenches, and their calm resolution and unswerving belief in their own prowess and the justness of their cause impressed him profoundly.

This commentator felt compelled, however reluctantly, to bear witness to the brutality of the retreating Austrians to the Polish peasantry. Of this he saw numerous examples, as also instances of the people's retaliation upon the enemy, such as the wholesale destruction of the Austrian General Desveaux's beautiful chateau. Little things will stick in the mind, and Mr. Pares noted amid the ruins of this noble house a map of the Austrian army manœuvres of 1893, "twenty years after." The Russians deemed themselves among friends when they mingled with the Ruthenian inhabitants of Galicia, speaking their language

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and treating them with all good fellowship. The invaders' relations with the Jewish population were scarcely so amicable in all cases.

Another correspondent of a great newspaper who had the harrowing experience of traversing some of the battle-fields of Galicia after the Austrian breakdown presents the following vivid and touching picture:

"In the very centre of this zone of misery two roads intersect, and at the angle stands a huge wooden cross on which hangs the carved figure of the Saviour. For a hundred years, no doubt, this monument to brotherly love has hung above the cross-roads so that the pious might pause in their journey to cross themselves and mutter a prayer. Nothing could be more incongruous than to see this sacred emblem: the mute

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evidence of a religious people. The top of the wooden upright is shattered by a bullet, while one arm of the figure of Jesus has been carried away by a shrapnel shell. What, indeed, must have been the thoughts of the patient Austrians lying in their exposed position and dying in hundreds as they beheld the shot and shell bursting about the carved figure of Him whose work on earth was to spread peace and brotherly love! The patient face of the Christ looks down upon a newly made grave wherein lie the shattered remains of 124 men who died almost at the foot of the sacred figure."

For the defence of Przemysl many thousands of workmen were impressed to assist in the work of strengthening the fortifications, being called in from the neighbouring villages under threat

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of extreme penalties. The quantity of ammunition in the place was enormous, but the shortage of provisions is claimed by the Russians as being due to the swiftness of their initiative, whereby great quantities of stores intended for the defending force had been captured. The investing army had now a large number of batteries in position, and though they could well afford to take things easily so as to avoid needless wastage of life, the progress made was steady. German, and not Austrian, leadership was directing the defence of the stronghold. Every effort was made by them to hearten their men into the belief that the combined Austro-German operations proceeding towards the river San might, and in all likelihood would, culminate in the relief of the place. On this point, and of the operations in Galicia

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generally, Colonel Shumsky wrote during the second week of October :

" All the attempts of the enemy to cross the San have ended in a miserable fiasco. The Austro-German forces are making their attempts at various points of the river. First the artillery deluges the right shore with shells, and then infantry detachments approach the river ; but Russian shrapnel causes them enormous losses. Dead bodies are washed down the San to the Vistula, and on to Sandomir and Ivangorod.

" Before this fortress the battle continues day and night without a moment's intermission. The Germans are giving the defence a very energetic character. To all appearances the fortress is well supplied with ammunition. Our troops are making a gradual but persistent attack. Sometimes a regiment becomes

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impatient with the slowness of the progress and storms the nearest line of works. Sometimes a sharp blow, delivered in the night, brings about the fall of a strong fort. In this way several works have been taken.

"These unexpected blows clearly greatly excite the garrison. Right through the night projectors search the battle-field, and their long white rays rest tremulously on every fold of the ground. At times something alarms the forts, and the air is instantly filled with the thunder of roused Austrian guns. The fire is then kept up for thirty minutes to an hour before it again subsides."

He adds that "the tremendous strategic front becomes elongated just as it does in France." This immense battle-line was now beginning to be known to the strategists as the line "Cracow-Przemysl-

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Thorn," as it began to be growingly obvious that Austrian Cracow and Silesian Thorn would presently be the scene of the biggest operations of the conflicting Empires.

On October 13–14 great Austro-German columns were in touch with their enemy south-east of Sandomir and west of Przemysl. On the first of the dates named an Austrian force deploying by way of Samok-Lisko upon Sambor was hurled back with the loss of 7 officers and 500 men captured, and next day they lost several hundred more prisoners. Hitherto the success of the Russian arms in Galicia had been so continuous that the official despatches and the newspaper reports in the Petrograd papers were fairly representative of the facts, patriotic feeling experiencing no temptation to practise a diplomatic "economy of the

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truth." But now we find it hard to reconcile the Petrograd reports with reliable information from other sources as to what was happening in the region of the San.

The news that came from Petrograd, directly or through Rome and Paris, told of repeated victories over the Austrians on the San. But it would seem that these reports were only repetitions of news already sent, and referred to the opening stage of the fighting with the Austrian advance on Von Hindenburg's extreme right.

There appears to be no doubt that the peril of Warsaw and the need of drawing heavy reinforcements from Galicia to assist in repelling the German invasion of Poland and then in following up the enemy's retirement, led to the army on the San being so weakened for the

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moment that all it could do was to hold its own for a while about Sandomir, near the junction of the San and the Vistula. In doing this it rendered a solid service to the Grand-duke Nicholas, as it prevented the line of the Vistula being turned above Ivangorod.

But something had to be sacrificed to secure this result. Jaroslav was abandoned for the moment, and reoccupied by the Austrians, and the siege of Przemysl was raised. There was a day of enthusiastic rejoicing when the relieving column marched into the hard-pressed and half-starved city. Received at the gates by the civil and ecclesiastical authorities, the troops marched amidst cheering crowds to the town hall, where General von Kusmanek, the commander of the fortress, stood waiting to greet them.

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Even more welcome than the battle-grimed soldiers was the long convoy of supply wagons that they escorted. The garrison and the people could again enjoy an unstinted meal, and looked forward to a long respite from the trials they had endured. But the military authorities had no illusions in the outlook. Przemysl had hardly been relieved when bad news came from the scene of the great battles in Central Poland, and the pressure of the Russian forces began to be felt at once, for on the news of the Grand-duke's success against Von Hindenburg they at once abandoned their attitude of stubborn defence for a vigorous offensive. It was realised that Przemysl might soon be once more ringed round with fire and steel, so steps were taken to prepare for a new siege. Supplies of all kinds were poured into the

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place by day and by night, the control of the junction at Jaroslav facilitating this revictualling operation. At the same time some thousands of the non-combatant population were sent away so as to reduce the number of "useless mouths" to a minimum. In a week Przemysl was ready to defend itself again, and to face a siege under greatly improved conditions.

The work had indeed to be interrupted before Von Kusmanek had done all he hoped to accomplish. For the retreat of Von Hindenburg in the centre was at once followed by the column that had attacked Ivangorod returning through Radom. The whole invasion was collapsing and the Austrian position on the San had become untenable. Petrograd could now resume a true record of Galician victories, as the retiring enemy fought a series of rearguard actions each of which

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ended in the capture of Austrian prisoners by the pursuing columns of the Russian left.

But before telling of the closing scenes of Von Hindenburg's ambitious effort to overrun the country of the Vistula and clear Galicia of the Russian armies, as a result of his hoped-for success, we must note some characteristic aspects of the campaign that reveal the special characteristics of the Russian soldier and his leaders. These will bring out something of the human interest of the war better even than the story of marches and battles and strategical combinations.

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CHAPTER VII

STORIES FROM THE FIGHTING LINE

THE Austrian Army in these Polish campaigns suffered under the serious disadvantage that, amongst the various nationalities serving in it, there were many men whose sympathies were with the enemy, or whose hearts were not on the Austrian side. The Slav soldiers felt they were fighting against their brother Slavs of Russia, and there were also in the Austrian army in Galicia Italian regiments from the Venetian border about Trieste and Fiume. It was a sagacious move on the part of the Tsar's Government to make an offer in the first stage of the campaign to Italy "as an evidence of his friendship and sympathy," to liberate and send to Italy all prisoners of

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Italian nationality taken in Galicia, on condition that the Italian Government would engage not to send them back to Austria. To this the Italian Prime Minister, Signor Salandra, formally replied that the rules of international law prohibited his acceptance of the offer. Commenting upon this, the Rome semi-official *Messaggero* remarked that, "Whatever Signor Salandra's answer may be, the Italian people are grateful to the Tsar, whose generous humanitarian proposal contains also the official, solemn, and precise affirmation that Russia recognises the right of Italy to the Italian provinces that are still under Austrian rule."

General Rennenkampf took with him into East Prussia, as a kind of mascot or symbol that should be prophetic of the signal success ultimately destined to crown the Muscovite arms, the identical

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flag carried by the celebrated Skobelev on his momentous campaign of 1877. A small thing in itself, this was well calculated to make a direct appeal to the impressionable Slav temperament, to the young men who had heard from their fathers of the wonderful "White General" who in the great days of Plevna and the Balkans was perhaps more responsible than any other single factor for the triumph of the Cross over the Crescent.

It was an incident characteristic of the pervading spirit, and one well calculated to stimulate it. But there were thousands of incidents and scenes that have perforce to be dismissed in a line, or even not referred to at all. Among the many gallant spirits marked out for special distinction of the Tsar was the Captain Pleshkoff whose superb horsemanship had been acclaimed year after year at the

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Olympia Horse Show in London, where as recently as 1914 he carried off the King Edward VII Cup. Captain Pleshkoff received a nasty wound in one of the cavalry combats around Warsaw. He is a Cossack by descent, a pupil of the famous General Brussiloff, and is noted among his admiring countrymen as the "inventor" of a new system of riding. The captain shared the fate of most reformers when he attempted to bring his riding method to the notice of his colonel, an old-fashioned martinet commanding the Tsar's Life Guard Cuirassiers. In fact, it led to Pleshkoff's temporary severance from his beloved regiment when he became adjutant to one of the Grand-duke's ; but on the outbreak of the present struggle he returned to the Life Guard Cuirassiers.

But there are so many men of Pleshkoff's stamp among the Tsar's eight mil-

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lions of fighters that his Imperial master might well be tempted to say, with a great leader of the past, "If I made all my brave soldiers generals, there wouldn't be any privates left." Such a one was the wounded warrior who averred, with crystalline sincerity and self-confidence, that if he had not been laid aside by a bullet the campaign for Russian Poland would have been a much more brief affair!

A parallel story to one coming from the western theatre of war—of the young girl who, by assuming masculine attire, managed to be accepted for service with the Flying Corps—is that of a young Russian lady who managed to smuggle herself into a cavalry regiment leaving for the front. Not only so, but this young Amazon, in addition to bearing herself bravely in the field—she was a fine horsewoman—assisted a trooper in

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rescuing a wounded comrade. The secret of her sex was only discovered when, a few days later, she herself was wounded. Again, two lads about fifteen years of age escaped from their parents' home in Moscow, and, following the fortunes of a regiment belonging to that ancient city, were present at half a dozen battles of Rennenkampf's campaign in East Prussia, "crawling on their stomachs with reserves of ammunition to the firing line." Apparently these adventurous boys escaped unscathed.

A story with a delightful flavour of the hoax running through it was communicated during October by the Petrograd correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*. It betrays a sense of Slavonic humour which, it is to be hoped, was not entirely lost upon the victims of the ruse:

"A Russian airman, accompanied by

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an observation officer, was flying over the enemy's territory, when he was obliged to descend, owing to engine trouble. The pilot and the officer were wearing leather clothes, without any distinctive mark. They were working on the motor when suddenly seven Austrian soldiers, in charge of an under-officer, appeared over the crest of a little hill and approached them. Resistance was impossible, for the Russians had no weapons but revolvers. Fortunately, the officer knew German. Calling loudly to the Austrian officer, he ordered him, in a peremptory manner, to come and help him mend the motor. The Austrian, believing he was in the presence of a superior officer, hastened with his men to obey, and soon the engine had been put right. The aeroplane started off, and as it ascended in spirals to the clouds a paper fell at the feet of the gaping Austrians.

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It contained a short message of thanks to the officer and his men for giving such timely aid to Russian aviators."

At the time of General Rennenkampf's severe reverse near Soldau after his first brilliant incursion into East Prussia, it had been generally inferred that the brave General Samsonoff and other leading officers had been killed in the practical surrounding of a large Russian force of two army corps. A gleam came out of the fog of war when it was semi-officially announced that this was not the case. It was the deadly explosion of a chance shell that killed General Samsonoff, General Martos, and other officers of the Staff. The former was particularly beloved by his men, but he had a fatal facility for exposing his life unduly and recklessly. In reply to all remonstrances he would simply say, "My place is

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where my soldiers are"—and to this trait, not less than to his care for the comfort of his men, was due the remarkable popularity that he enjoyed among the rank and file. No officer was more universally regretted on the Russian side.

The Tsar took the unusual but intensely popular course of conferring all four Classes of the Order of St. George, the Russian Victoria Cross, upon a humble trooper of Hussars. This man—a type of the many who honestly cannot see that they have done anything out of the common in performing a deed of the purest and most unselfish heroism—was orderly to an officer. The latter fell dangerously wounded, when this brave fellow rescued him from a storm of shot and carried him a distance of *four miles*. During that long and wearisome tramp with his helpless burden the soldier had to dodge the

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enemy's patrols a number of times. Not only so, but in their path lay several canals, all of which he swam, supporting his officer in the water as best he could.

Another soldier, brought into the field-hospital at Druskeniki, had received *twenty-four bullets* in his legs. He was not aware that many of them had even struck him—an intensely interesting point this, and not wholly unreminiscent of Mr. Winston Churchill's testimony of his and others' experience in the great Dervish rush at Omdurman, when they were scarcely conscious of wounds or of tumult. Well, when this Russian soldier recovered consciousness after having one of his feet torn off, he found himself lying in a depression of the ground, with shrapnel and rifle-bullets whistling over him. The undulating ground unquestionably saved him from death, as six bullets

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passed through his pail and four through his water-bottle! He lay thus for some twenty-four hours before being discovered and carried into safety, having spent this agonising period in praying for a passing projectile to put an end to his sufferings.

A visitor to the scene of the desperately sustained struggle for the line of the river San points to the melancholy fact that at one point alone where 200,000 men were locked in a death-grapple for upwards of a week (numbers larger than those engaged either at Gettysburg or Waterloo), the name of the wretched little village would not be known to one in a thousand who looked at the map. Yet the reaper Death found fearful employment during those seven or eight days of pitiless slaughter. "At the summit of and just beyond the crest of the hill is the line where stood the Austrian artil-

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lery in their efforts to encounter the hell of heavier fire let loose on them by the Russians. The heaps of brass cartridge-cases show how stubbornly the Austrians contested this ridge. Here and there one sees where a big shell landed true. Splinters and bits of wheels scattered in every direction spell the end of this particular gun-crew. Behind this the Austrians seem to have had a cavalry support of some kind, for in a little hollow just over the ridge we come upon a mass of cavalry accoutrements. The large metal helmets of the Austrian dragoons are scattered everywhere, some of them twisted by bits of shell, others punctured with the single bullet-hole which, coupled with the deep brown stain on the inside, tells what happened to the unfortunate who owned it. We find one on which the name and regiment of the wearer is written,

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a name no doubt that when published as among the dead will bring misery and suffering to some home in the beautiful valley of the Danube, where even now perhaps the wife or mother anxiously awaits news of this very one who sleeps now in a great trench with hundreds of his fellows."

It is a relief to turn momentarily from such scenes of horror and bloodshed to the humorous aspect—grimly so, perhaps, but none the less humorous—of war. Thus, for example, there is something of a Gilbertian touch about the "interchange" of the Kaiser's hunting-box and the Tsar's hunting-box (the latter's at Spala, near Tomascheff) in the two Polands. The Russians appear to have seized upon the one and the Germans upon the other, and to have thoroughly despoiled them. Still on the grimly humorous side ("the hostilities in

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Poland are taking on a very embittered and cruel form," he says), the *Daily Telegraph's* Petrograd correspondent tells of the form of receipt (!) that the German troops would leave with the ignorant peasantry after commandeering all sorts of supplies. Two such written acknowledgments which were shown to the correspondent ran: "I am much obliged to you for your beautiful horse," and "Whoever presents this at the end of the war will be hanged."

This same *Telegraph* correspondent states in definite terms of the Russians that "looting and licence are unknown, and everything taken is paid for in hard cash. They are welcomed as deliverers by the Polish peasantry, who bring them refreshments and cigarettes, for which payment is refused."

A hundred German cavalry entered the town of Turburg on September 29.

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They quartered themselves at the mansion of a prominent member of the Duma, M. Vasilchikoff, ill-treated his servants, and demanded 250 buckets (!) of brandy, beer, and schnapps. They then cleared the little town of all food and clothing, leaving slips of paper on which was scribbled, "The Russian Government will pay." They wound up by carrying off a priest and the local Rabbi as hostages of war.

Another hundred German cavalry encountered twenty Russian cavalry, who incontinently fled with the loss of one wounded. As he lay on the ground, still able to use his carbine, he took careful aim and picked off three of the pursuing Prussians. The peasantry would have carried the wounded trooper to safety, but he resolutely replied, "No! I will never hide from Germans." For this he paid with his life, for the enemy,

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who had abandoned their pursuit of his comrades because his good shooting had made them suspect an ambush, returned and promptly shot him dead. It is only fair to add that on an occasion when the Russians discovered that a number of peasants had been hanged by the enemy, they retaliated by hanging from trees three German officers and nineteen men. Of such acts of savage reprisal there are doubtless numerous unrecorded instances.

An "iron vineyard" is the slightly decorative description applied to a German position during the holocaust of Russian Poland, by a Russian War Correspondent who was not permitted to indicate the precise spot from which he was writing. He adds the grisly comment that the "vintage" of that iron vineyard was the blood of 6,000 German soldiers. The surrounding forests had

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been razed as if shaved by a gigantic razor. A large village that had occupied the scene of this unnamed battle had totally disappeared, as having proved an obstacle to the Russian advance and a support for the German retreat.

One of the episodes inseparable from a warfare in which members of the Royal Families of every one of the great Powers are playing a soldier's part, took place on October 11. On that day Prince Olaf, son of the Grand-duke Constantine, received a wound in the leg "in a successful skirmish with a German patrol." At first it was regarded hopefully as being but a trifling injury, but an operation became necessary and the young Prince died, pneumonia doubtless supervening. He passed away in the presence of the Grand-duke and Duchess and of his brother, Prince Igor. It is one of the

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bitterest ironies of war that this gifted young man's leanings and aspirations had always been rather literary and musical than martial. At the Lyceum, which he left only in 1913, he enjoyed such a brilliant career as a student that his tutors did their best to dissuade him from over-taxing a constitution never too robust. He published an essay on the works of Pushkin which was acclaimed as a model of discerning and discriminating criticism. Prince Olaf's natural inclinations were of the simplest kind, and he hated the rigidity of etiquette.

An author much admired by him, the Polish novelist Sinciewitz, took service with the Tsar's Army. Apparently he was wounded and taken prisoner, though there seems still some confusion as to what really happened to him.

Had the Austrians in Galicia fared

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better or worse than their opponents believed they would at the outset? A difficult question to answer off-hand, but at all events the Russians had the best of reasons to be thoroughly delighted with the progress of the Tsar's arms in three months of war, in the earlier stages of which the plucky Serbian resistance to the legions of Francis Joseph had proved of considerable utility. Says a well-informed critic of the Russo-Austrian campaign:

"Success at the outset of a campaign has an influence of the highest value upon the armies engaged. In this case the Russians had the prospect of securing fairly easy victories at the outset, and, at the very least, the certainty of being able to march far into hostile territory without having any very serious obstacle to overcome. It was not likely that the German armies, weakened as they were

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by the very conditions under which the war opened, would attempt any stubborn resistance in advance of the line of fortresses along the lower Vistula and at the extremities of the Frisches Haff. And it was quite certain that the Austrians would not make any prolonged resistance in Eastern Galicia. Their first serious stand would not be met until the neighbourhood of Przemysl was reached."

A caustic criticism of British as compared with Russian effort in the world-war came from Petrograd about the end of October. It was pointed out that, although the Muscovite Empire might represent about one-sixth the area of the whole world, and although the Russian census papers were circulated in seventy languages, Great Britain reckoned three times as many subjects as her Ally. Yet what had Great Britain done by com-

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parison? Her fighting force in the field represented not more than 5 per cent. of the total battling against the might of Germany and Austria. "This may be Government of a kind," added the critic, whose subsequent remarks appeared to have proved too strong for the censor. He went on to complain of the colossal ignorance of Russia and Russian ideals possessed by this country, and entered an earnest plea for a more intelligent comprehension of existing conditions than at present obtaining. It is unquestionably true that Englishmen of all classes have still a great deal to unlearn concerning the Empire but for whose energetic and magnificently self-sacrificing initiative the crushing of German militarism would not have become a practically assured result.

Russia, it is added, has much to teach us; but *not the Russia known in England.*

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CHAPTER VIII

THE GERMAN RETREAT AND THE RUSSIAN PURSUIT TO THE FRONTIER

At the beginning of November, just three months after the declaration of war, it seemed that the German invasion of Poland had ended in complete failure and that the battle before Warsaw would be decisive of the whole conflict in Eastern Europe.

In August, while the Russian mobilisation was still incomplete, Rennenkampf had made his daring raid into East Prussia, with the view of helping the Allies in the west by forcing Germany to retain a large army for her own defence in the east. Though the invaders had

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been defeated by Von Hindenburg in the great battle of Tannenberg, or Osterode, and expelled from the invaded province, the indirect object of the raid had been obtained.

September had brought victory for Russia on both wings of the long battle-line. On the right, or northern wing, Rennenkampf, after fighting a series of rearguard actions in the frontier forest about Augustovo, had retired behind the Niemen, where he was largely reinforced, and repulsed the rash attempt of the Germans to follow him up and force the crossing of the Niemen. After this Rennenkampf had driven the Germans back to their own frontier, and was again threatening East Prussia with invasion. On the left, or southern wing, the Austrian defence of Eastern Galicia had collapsed and her army had been

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driven from the Vistula. Lemberg, the capital of Galicia, had been occupied, the line of the river San had been forced, Jaroslav captured, and Przemysl besieged. On the extreme Russian left raids had been made through the passes of the Carpathians into Northern Hungary, and from the left bank of the San an army was advancing to attack Cracow.

At the beginning of October two-thirds of Galicia had been overrun. In Central Poland the Russian armies were advancing in three directions. North of the Vistula an army was moving towards Thorn. On the other bank of the great river a central column moving towards the frontiers of the province of Posen had reached the valley of the Warthe. On the left centre a third force on the Upper Warthe was approaching the frontiers of Silesia; but subsequent

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events during this same month showed, as we have seen, that the forces thus pushed forward from the Russian centre towards the German frontier line were little more than a strong screen or outpost line, while the main mass of the central forces was still concentrated on the Middle Vistula, and in the triangle of fortresses above Warsaw.

In the second week of October came Von Hindenburg's great invasion of Russian Poland. The dash for Warsaw was evidently intended to relieve the pressure of the enemy on Eastern Prussia and on Galicia by forcing him to draw in troops from the wings to strengthen the centre at this critical moment.

As we have seen, the Germans partly obtained this result. Their advancing force drove in the Russian detachments in Western Poland, and the Grand-duke

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Nicholas withdrew part of the army operating in Galicia to assist in the defence of the Upper Vistula near Ivangorod. The result was that the Austrians were able to reoccupy Jaroslav and to raise the siege of Przemysl for a while. Then came the days of hard fighting along the San and the Vistula, in which the Russians not only held their own, but, making a counter-attack in force near Warsaw, broke through the German centre and compelled a general retreat of the invaders.

This movement began in the third week of October, and it is quite evident that, though defeated, the German armies and their Austrian Allies were neither demoralised by their failure nor broken up by the Russian counter-attack. From day to day they showed an energy and tenacity to which it would be unfair

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to refuse the fullest praise. The retreat was a slow retirement, in which each day there was a series of hard-fought rear-guard actions. The great battle-line was now surging westward across the Polish plain, but every step of the way was to be disputed. On October 24 stern fighting that gradually assumed the character and dimensions of another continuous battle or series of sanguinary combats was proceeding for the possession of this frontier. The front extended roughly for about a hundred versts, or sixty-six miles, from Rawa to the south of the river Iljanke. The roads leading to Radom and Petrikau were the scene of particularly close and bloody fighting. North of Rawa the Russian infantry established a marked superiority with the bayonet. In one miserable village (Motchidlo) they buried seven hundred

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German dead. Four hundred more were accounted for (captured) south-east of Rawa, and two batteries of quick-firers were taken at bayonet-point in the vicinity of Kazimerjefu.

Much of this fighting took place over marshy forest-lands, and in weather so bad that the guns often sank to their axles. The forest of Nemglovo was occupied by the Russian advanced troops. More artillery and prisoners were gathered in along the shocking roads leading to Novo Alexandrovo. Indeed, a Russian official report claimed the substantial acquisition, during this stern forest-fighting on October 24–26, of 3,000 men and 50 officers as prisoners, and 8 guns and numerous quick-firers.

Many gallant counter-attacks along the ever-widening front were repulsed with heavy slaughter. At any given point,

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the Russians appear generally to have possessed a preponderance of numbers, while the sense of victory kept the men in thoroughly good heart. The last days of October and first days of November saw nothing save the same succession of hard-fought rearguard actions. On November 7 Russian Poland had been almost cleared of the invaders, and at more than one point the Tsar's vanguards had crossed the German frontier. On the right Rennenkampf was again entering the East Prussian lake region near Lyck. On the right centre north of the Vistula, from Lomza to within a few miles of the fortress of Thorn, the Russians were close up to the frontier, driving the German left before them through the marshy forest region of Northern Poland. In the centre the frontier of the Prussian province of Posen had been passed by

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the Cossacks south of Thorn. In South-western Poland the Germans and Austrians were still retiring through Russian territory; but they had abandoned Lodz and Kielce, and it was generally expected that their retreat would only stop at Cracow and on the Upper Oder about Breslau. On the extreme Russian left the Austrians had been forced back half way to Cracow, Jaroslav had been reoccupied by General Brusiloff, and Przemysl was again besieged.

During the retreat through Poland the Germans, under cover of their fighting rear-guards, had very thoroughly wrecked the railways, and done considerable damage to the few paved highways of the district. This work of destruction was evidently carried out deliberately by order of Von Hindenburg and the Head-quarter Staff. A large force of engineers

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must have been used to effect it, and an enormous quantity of explosives employed in the work. Along the railways every station had been thoroughly wrecked. The buildings were burned, the rails torn up at all the junctions, curves, and crossings—the points at which the relaying of the line would require special material—the water-towers for the locomotives had been blown up, and all signals thrown down and telegraph apparatus destroyed or removed. On both railways and roads every bridge had been blown up, and the roads themselves had been very seriously damaged in a way that showed that a very large number of men must have been employed in the work of destruction. The metalled or paved surface of the roads had been broken up with the help of explosives, the surface being destroyed,

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not always from side to side of the road, but checker-fashion. Patches of the pavement being alternately destroyed on the left and the right side of the roadway, where explosives had been freely used, the road had thus become a kind of zig-zag line of yawning craters. This wrecking of the roads and railways seriously delayed the Russian pursuit, for the country, twice traversed by large armies, had been exhausted of what supplies it could afford, and the Grand-duke had to feed his troops during the pursuit by bringing up everything he needed from Warsaw and the Middle Vistula region.

At the time the impression given by this wholesale destruction of the means of communication in Western Poland was that Von Hindenburg and the German Staff had definitely abandoned all hope of renewing the invasion. It was argued

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that, if they intended to make another attempt to seize Warsaw, they might indeed have done such partial damage to the railways as would delay the Russian pursuit, but they would not have thus thoroughly destroyed them at the cost of an enormous expenditure of time and labour. If they meant to invade the country again in any force the railways would be a necessity to them. The destruction of the lines seemed therefore to be a counsel of despair, and it was expected that the next phase of the campaign would be the defence by the Germans of their fortified frontier-line.

So persuaded was the Russian Headquarter Staff that the German offensive had definitely come to an end, that preparations were made in the first days of November for the attack on the frontier fortresses of Germany. The programme

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for the next phase of the campaign was that on the left the advance in Galicia was to be pressed up to Cracow, and, once that place was invested, there was to be a march from the left and left centre into Silesia. The invasion of that province, one of the great industrial regions of Germany, would be a heavy blow to the Kaiser, and at the same time a menace to his Austrian Ally, for through Silesia lies the easiest way from Russian Poland to Vienna itself. Between the western end of the Carpathians and the mass of hills that form the mountain-lands of Northern Moravia and Bohemia there is a stretch of lower ground forming a wide hollow running south-westward from the Upper Oder region towards Vienna. This valley has often in the past seen the march of armies towards the Austrian capital. Thus, for instance, it was by

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this line that the Russian armies, then allied with Austria, marched south-westward in 1805. The object of the march was to occupy Vienna, then held by Napoleon, and the adventure ended unsuccessfully at Austerlitz.

On the right the Russian armies were to continue the new invasion of East Prussia, and in the centre there was to be a direct menace to Berlin by an attempt to break through the frontier fortress-line. The railways were being partly repaired, and a siege-train was about to be moved up from Warsaw against Thorn, the point selected for the first attack, because the possession of it would give the Russians command of the Lower Vistula.

The fortress of Thorn is situated within five miles of the frontier on both banks of the river and is the junction for five

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railway lines. Thus the Germans could operate on both sides of the great river. It may be said to dominate all the highways between East Prussia and the rest of Germany. In conjunction with the lesser, but still imposing fortresses of Kulm, Fordan, and Graudenz, it forms the pivot for an army acting on the defensive on the line of the Vistula. Since the opening weeks of the war six thousand labourers had been engaged night and day in strengthening Thorn's defences.

A thousand fortress-guns and nine great forts, the latter named after Teutonic rulers and leaders, constitute its main armament. They are thus described by the Russian Colonel Shumsky:

"The defence works of Thorn comprise nine main forts—Scharnhorst, Yorck, Bülow, Wilhelm II., Heinrich von Zalzie,

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Grosser Kurfürst, Hertzog, Albrecht, Friedrich der Grosse, and Dohna. Between these forts there are seven intermediate works, which are separated by distances of from half to three-quarters of a mile. In consequence of the short distances separating the forts, a most destructive cross-fire can be obtained from them.

"The forts are distant between three-quarters of a mile and a mile from the outskirts of the town, which is accordingly within easy reach of the shells of the attacking force. The forts are connected in their rear by a circular highway, on which are sixteen infantry barracks and twenty-eight subterranean magazines. To this road there radiate from the town numerous sunk ways, masked with turf.

"The advanced positions before Thorn are a mile from the forts on the right bank

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of the river. The armament of the fortress, according to the usual German standard, will include twenty-seven long-range guns and twenty smaller pieces for repelling assaults on each of the main forts. Thus on the nine forts there will be altogether 414 guns. The seven intermediate works will each mount ten of the larger and eleven of the smaller guns: altogether 154. In the central enceinte there are understood to be 140 guns. If the reserve is added we get an aggregate of 1,000 guns, of which 60 per cent. are of long range.

"The minimum infantry garrison of Thorn is estimated at four battalions for the forts and two for the central area. The fortress is divided into four sections, for each of which there must be a reserve of three battalions. The artillery garrison, reckoning eight men per gun, must

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be 8,000 strong, and there must be not less than one battalion of engineers. The total garrison cannot therefore be less than 35,000 men."

While preparations were being made for the attack on the frontier fortresses, the Tsar and Tsaritsa, accompanied by their daughters the Grand-duchesses Olga and Tatiana, took the highly popular step of paying a visit to the garrison and hospitals of the fortress of Ivangorod, so recently the scene of such desperate German attempts to break through on this part of the line of the Vistula after the smashing defeat of their rush for Warsaw. The Imperial party came from Lublin, and were received on arrival by the Commandant of Ivangorod, the Grand-duke Nicholas Michailovitch, and by General Schwarz. The Tsar gave public expression to the feeling of national

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exhilaration in the following brief but eloquent words: "With faith in the help and blessing of the All-Highest, and in the power of the mighty arms of united Russia, our great country will conclude no peace until the resistance of the enemy has been finally broken, and the realisation of the tasks bequeathed to us by our ancestors has been accomplished."

In Galicia more solid Russian successes and a notable weakening in the power and solidarity of the resistance marked the growing pressure of the invaders of Austrian territory. South of Przemysl, in one day's fighting early in November, a thousand prisoners and some guns were taken. Przemysl was quite cut off, though replying energetically to a severe bombardment by Dimitrieff's siege-train. A sortie was beaten back with much loss of life. On the 10th Krasno was occupied,

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forty miles west of the fortress, and on the same day—a busy one in this particular war-zone—the Austrians were driven into the Carpathians after a further defeat on the San which enabled their relentless enemy to occupy Sanok and Turka.

Meanwhile the main invading army was pressing on towards Cracow, with a view to carrying on the siege of the place simultaneously with the investment of Przemysl. The occupation of Tarnow, an important railway centre, brought the Russians within forty-five miles of Cracow on the east side, while the passage of the river Schrenwaja from the Polish frontier advanced them almost within range of its guns.

In fact Cracow, defended by an Austro-German garrison now estimated at 100,000 men, had been steadily preparing

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for the worst. A fire-zone with a radius of eight miles had been cleared of all buildings, and steel cupolas had been provided for the main belt of its forts. On the Raba, a stream which empties itself into the Vistula twenty-five miles east of the city, a series of field-works was constructed, and the little town of Bochnia was also fortified.

"You may be surprised," wrote Mr. Granville Fortescue in the *Daily Telegraph*, "at the rapidity of the advance on Cracow. It resulted from the precipitate retirement of the German and the Austrian forces through South-west Poland. I am told that this withdrawal was so rapid that the Russian pursuing cavalry almost lost touch with their foes. The enemy did not stop until he was under the walls of Cracow. The force which is to attack it from the north

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had an almost free passage. Another Russian force coming from Tarnow had to fight for every inch of the ground occupied. The Austrian force, which has been retreating stubbornly along the Rzeszow-Neu Sandec Railway, has given considerable trouble."

The same journal, commenting upon the extraordinary extent of the battle-zone and the probability of the final fight for the Russo-Austro-German frontier extending over weeks rather than days, rightly remarked that the average workaday intellect failed to grasp the magnitude of the giant conflict in point of mere numbers alone. It hazarded the conjecture that over five hundred miles of front three and a half millions of Russians would be giving battle to a couple of millions of Austrians and Germans!

A tide of refugees, estimated at not less

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than a hundred thousand in a few days, was flying towards the city of Berlin from the East Prussian and Silesian borders. What a change from the "To Paris—to London!" of a few weeks previously. It was no longer practicable to conceal from the mass of the people the news of the total breakdown of the Polish invasion and the Austrian debacle. Events would still be slow-moving, since the mighty military machine of All the Russians, however well oiled, could only proceed at a certain regulated pace. Reports told of a new conception whereby the Germans hoped, northwards of Thorn, to concentrate masses of troops flanked by the river Vistula on the one hand and the river Warthe on the other. Here they would have the advantage of a battle-ground on a slightly raised platform as compared with the marshy wilder-

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nesses of the recent Polish operations; but the Masurian Lakes of East Prussia were by this time in Russian hands. The pace was quickening.

Mr. Fortescue, writing from Petrograd in praise of the bearing and discipline of the Tsar's millions moving ever westward, could not refrain from an expression of his appreciation of the marked improvement discernible after the lapse of a decade in the Muscovite "Tommy Atkins":

"A draft of recruits, headed by a band, passed through the square in front of Saint Isaac's Cathedral. I watched critically. They wore their ordinary clothes; the only uniforms seen were those of the non-commissioned officers. The astrakan cap was the distinctive head-covering, and every other man carried a tea-kettle. If I were a bat-

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talion commander I could not ask for a better-looking batch of recruits. All were over 5 ft. 6 in. in height. In carriage and a certain indefinable air they reminded me of the Guides from Manitoba. The more I see of these troops the more apparent the vast improvement of the Russian forces since the Russo-Japanese War becomes. That war was a liberal education for this Army, and as teachers of the art of war the Japanese are not to be despised. It is curious to note how this erstwhile enemy is now welcomed as an Ally. Japanese flags are always prominent in the colours of the nations fighting Germany. At all public occasions when the hymns of the different nations are played the solemn notes of the Japanese Anthem are loudly applauded. In the cause of humanity it may be said that Japan stands shoulder

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to shoulder with Russia. Russia need fear no enemy in her rear while Japan is her Ally."

There is no doubt that the Russian Army had been in many ways improved since the war with Japan. The greatest advance had been in the matter of the working of the General Staff. The most remarkable feature of this Polish campaign was the methodical way in which the huge armies engaged on the Russian side had been concentrated and were now moved and supplied in a difficult country and on a front of many hundred miles. It was evident that the Grand-duke Nicholas and his subordinates were so confident in the reorganised army that they were even venturing to take very serious risks. It is possible that they did this with complete knowledge of the peril they were incurring. It is remark-

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able that at this stage of the campaign, instead of concentrating their efforts on any one point, they were using the enormous numbers at their disposal to operate in at least five different directions—in East Prussia, on the Vistula towards Thorn, in the centre towards Posen, on the left centre by Lodz towards Silesia, and on the left in Galicia. These Galician operations were again being carried on on three subordinate lines. There was an attack on the line of the Carpathians from Eastern Galicia menacing Hungary, the siege of Przemysl, and the advance on Cracow; and, besides all this, subsequent events showed that two additional armies were concentrated in Southern Russia, in view of a possible rupture with Turkey. One of these armies was in the Caucasus, the other was kept waiting about Odessa as a

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reserve that might be used for a descent upon the Turkish coasts. There were further large garrisons kept about Petrograd, and as a reserve for the Polish campaign in the triangle of fortresses on the Central Vistula.

This division of force between so many different objectives certainly implied some risk of the German and Austrian Allies using their elaborately organised railway system to concentrate a superior force against some part of the far-extended line. The risk was taken in order, by menacing the whole of the eastern frontiers of Germany, to create such a state of alarm as would lead to German troops being withdrawn from the western theatre of war. There is evidence that movements of this kind actually took place, though perhaps not to the extent that was reported in the French and

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English Press. The movements in the end of October and during November would seem to have been chiefly the transfer by rail of cavalry divisions with their batteries of artillery from west to east. The war of entrenched positions then in progress all along the western front made mounted troops, comparatively speaking, useless. They were therefore sent eastward. Cavalry and horse artillery require a large number of trains for even a force of very moderate numbers, and the movement of these trains would easily give the impression that immense numbers of men were being sent eastward.

In the second week of November there were the first signs that the Germans, instead of standing passively upon the defensive, were once more venturing upon a counter-attack based upon their

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eastern fortress line. This led to a second invasion of Poland from Germany, but its story belongs to a new phase of the war. The first campaign in Poland had closed with success for the Russian arms all along the enormous frontier of nearly fifteen hundred miles in length, and after more than three months of war there were no enemies on Russian territory. The concentration of the armies of the Tsar had been completed, and the Grand-duke Nicholas had under his command the greatest array of combatants that had ever been assembled by any State since the history of warfare began.

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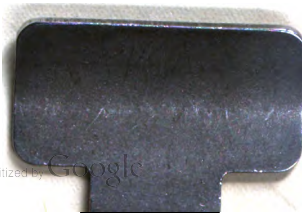

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